The spiny neuron is the most visible part of a much bigger Alsopian universe that has seen 180,000 schoolchildren passing through since it opened in 2005, the team of architects that worked on the original Blizard building – which has now been reimagined as the Neuron Pod – tells Simon Wolfson.

The team, led by architect, director, and partner of the firm Steven Chilton, had an intimate understanding of the campus’ history, having already helped to reinvent the Blizard building – home to the School of Biomedical Sciences – and other spaces on Queen Mary, University of London’s Mile End campus. This is the £2m Neuron Pod education centre, which opened on Thursday, and is the latest addition to Queen Mary’s campus. It will house a Neuron Pod learning centre, spaces for live science shows, hands-on workshops, experiments, debates and discussions, and eventually a café.

Neuron Pod will allow us to fulfil our potential and offer so much more to our visitors,” says Professor Fran Balkwill, the centre’s director. “What’s the Neuron Pod? It is a fitting final chapter for Alsop, who died last May, and a case where his will become a space where people can let their imaginations run riot.”

“Neuron Pod is a place that celebrates medical research and education – and has an interactive educational experience of projections and touch-screen monitors, interactive walls, space for live science shows, hands-on workshops, experiments, debates and discussions, and eventually a café,” says Balkwill.

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The pod has 3D projections of a spine, legs, dendrites, glial cells and a neuron, with a 3D baggage handling model to show what happens when someone is hit on the head with a hammer – which can explain why people get concussions. There is also an interactive wall that shows how the body works, and a co-creation wall which allows the public to annotate and add on to the wall.

“This is the first health and city centre designed by an architect, but this is all par for the course for a practice that was founded on the premise of...