

Electronic Supplementary Information for:

**Trapping an Unusual Pentacoordinate Carbon Atom in a Neutral
Trialuminum Complex**

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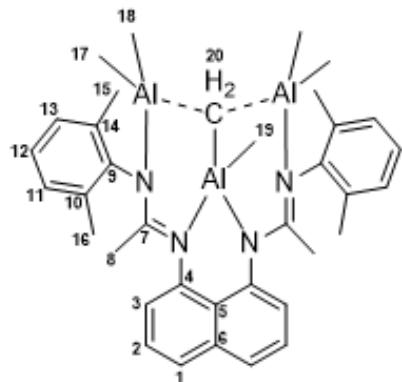
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Experimental Section

All the reagents were purchased from commercial sources, unless otherwise specified and used as received. NMR spectra were recorded on an NMR Bruker AV 400 instrument. Chemical shifts are given in parts per million relative to TMS [^1H and ^{13}C , $\delta(\text{SiMe}_4) = 0$] or an external standard. Most NMR assignments were supported by additional 2D experiments. HRMS-ESI-MS experiments were performed using a Thermo Scientific Exactive Plus Orbitrap spectrometer

Synthesis of complex 1



A solution of **L1** (100.0 mg, 0.22 mmol) was added to a solution of trimethylaluminum (TMA) (49.8 mg, 0.69 mmol), both in dry dichloromethane. The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at room temperature under a nitrogen atmosphere. After that, all volatiles were removed under a vacuum. The crude product was washed in anhydrous hexane and recrystallised from a concentrated solution in dry dichloromethane by toluene vapour diffusion into the solid. Compound **1** was obtained as pale orange crystals (116.3 mg, 85 %).

^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) $\delta/\text{ppm} = 7.68$ (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H, H₃), 7.42 (t, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H, H₂), 7.18 (t, $J = 4.4$ Hz, 2H, H₁₂), 7.10 (d, $J = 5.2$ Hz, 4H, H_{11,13}), 6.86 (d, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 2H, H₁), 2.39 (s, 6H, H₁₅), 2.25 (s, 6H, H₁₆), 1.86 (s, 6H, H₈), 0.26 (brs, 2H, H₂₀) –0.52 (s, 6H, H_{17,18}), –1.11 (s, 3H, H₁₉), –1.21 ppm (s, 6H, H_{17,18}).

$^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) $\delta/\text{ppm} = 170.95$ (C₇), 143.77–132.81 (C_{4–6,9,10,14}), 129.01 (C₁₂), 128.24 (C_{11,13}), 126.03 (C_{11,13}), 125.82 (C₂), 125.60 (C₃), 123.74 (C₁), 21.14 (C₈), 20.10 (C₁₆), 18.91 (C₁₅), –0.56 (C₂₀), –4.17 (C₁₉), –6.18 (C_{17,18}), –7.44 ppm (C_{17,18}).

HRMS (ESI): m/z [M+H]⁺ for C₃₆H₄₇Al₃N₄: calc: 617,733; found: 617.294.

Figure S1. ^1H -NMR spectrum of complex **1** in CDCl_3 .

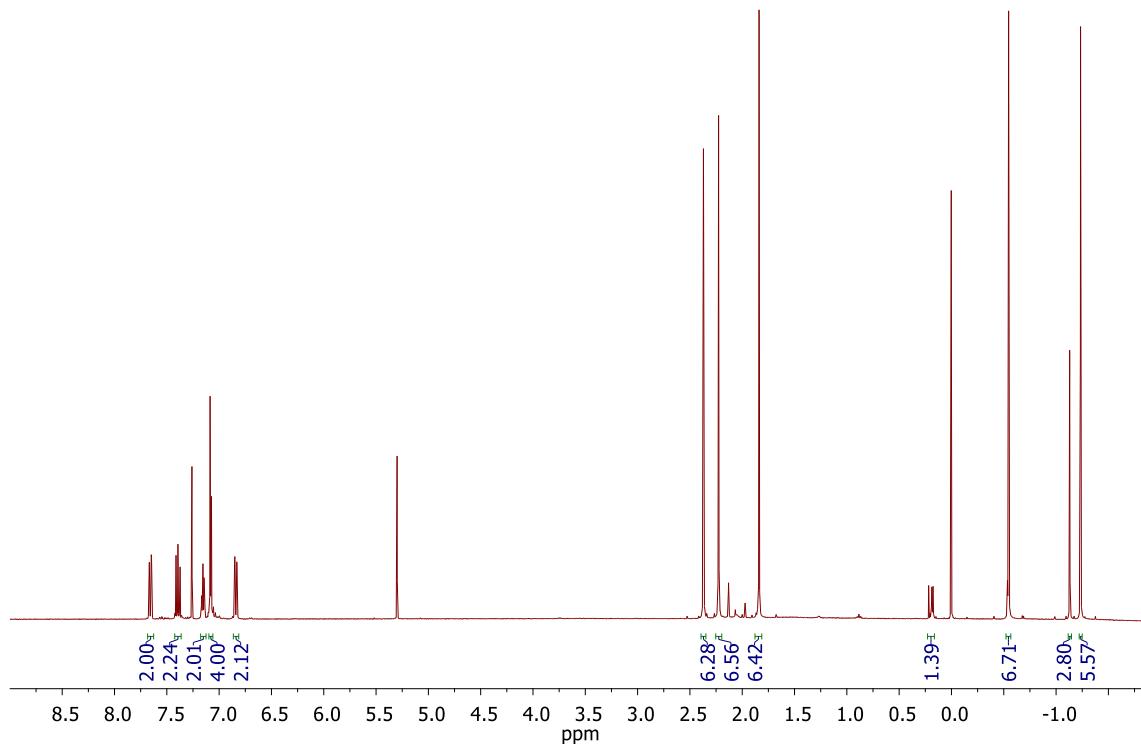


Figure S2. ^1H -NMR spectrum of complex **1** in CDCl_3 (region 8.0–4.4 ppm).

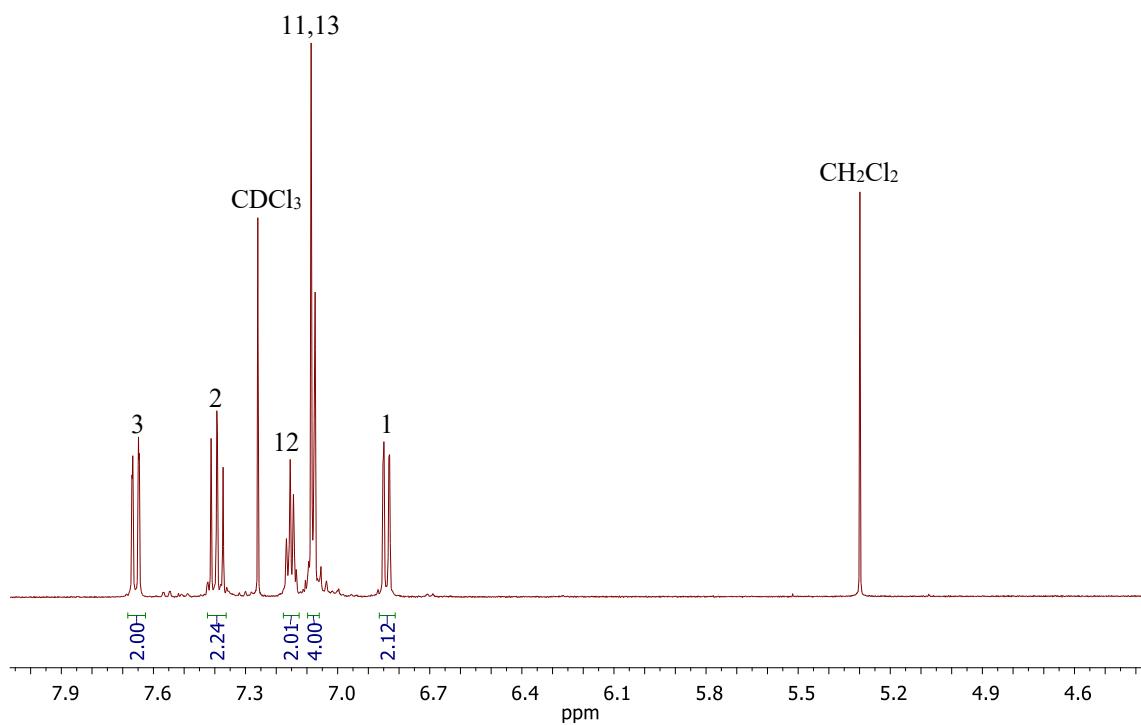


Figure S3. ^1H -NMR spectrum of complex **1** in CDCl_3 (region 3.0-(-1.5) ppm).

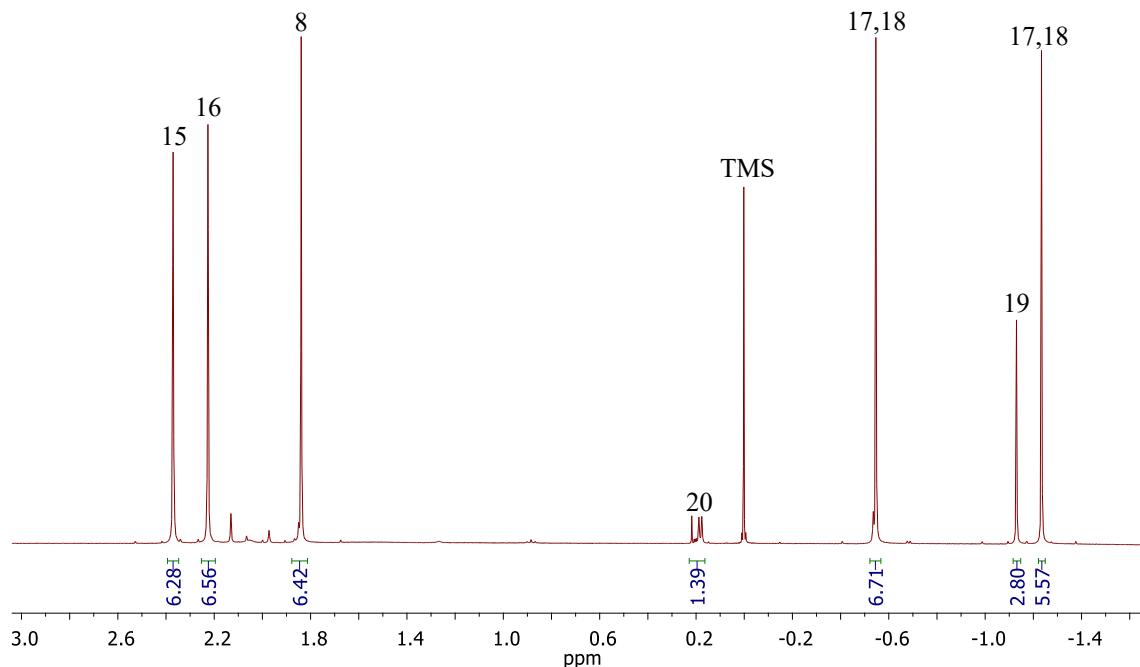


Figure S4. $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ -NMR spectrum of complex **1** in CDCl_3 .

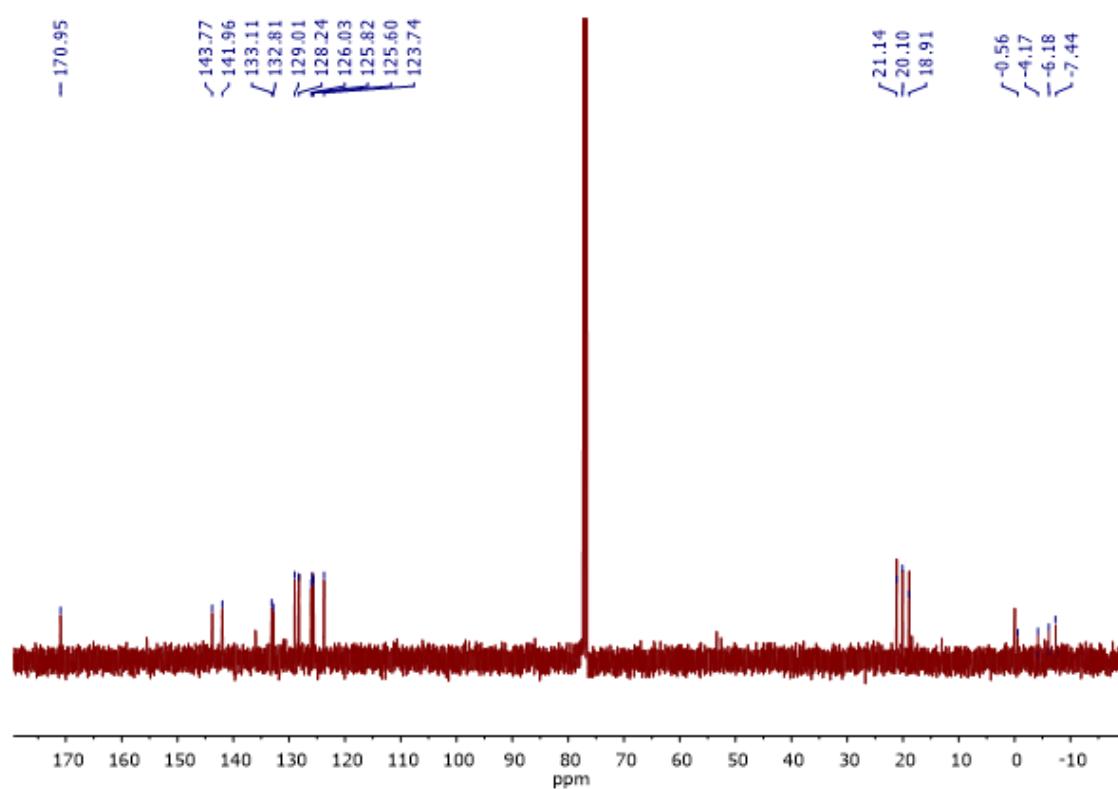


Figure S5. ^1H - ^{13}C g-HSQC spectrum of complex **1**.

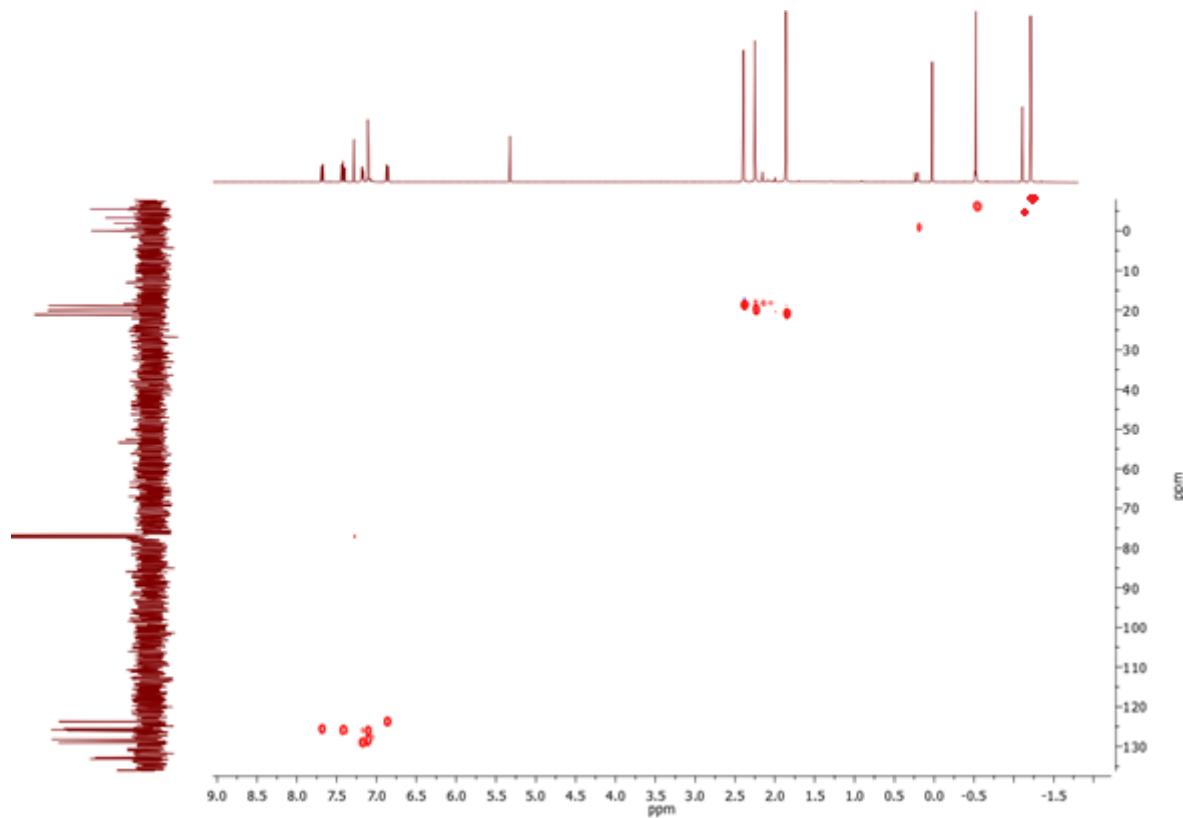
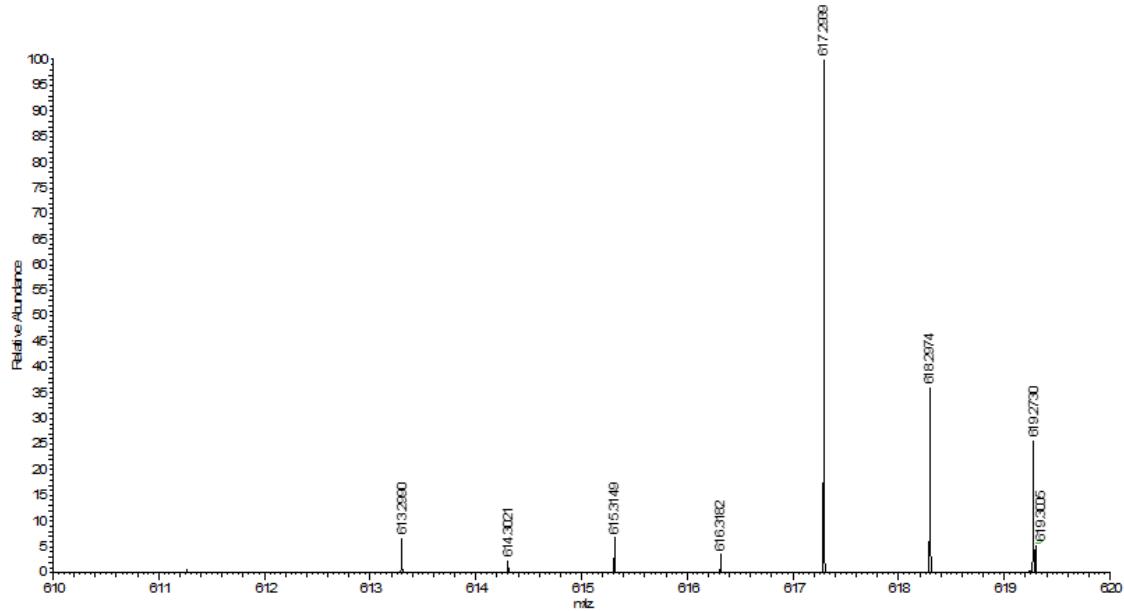


Figure S6. HRMS (ESI): m/z [M+H] $^+$ for complex **1**.



X-ray diffraction studies

Data sets for compound **1** were collected with a Bruker D8 Venture PHOTON 100 diffractometer.

Programs used: data collection, APEX3 V2016.1-0; cell refinement, SAINT V8.37A; data reduction: SAINT V8.37A; absorption correction, SADABS V2014/7;¹ structure solution SHELXT-2015;² structure refinement SHELXL-2015;³ and graphics, XP.⁴ R-values are given for observed reflections, and wR² values are given for all reflections.

Exceptions and unique features: For compound **1**, one disordered over two positions dichloromethane molecule was found in the asymmetrical unit. Several restraints (SADI, SAME, ISOR and SIMU) were used to improve refinement stability.

The hydrogens at the C9 atom were refined freely. CCDC Nr.: **2074776**.

Figure S7. Crystal structure of compound **1**. (Thermal ellipsoids are shown with 30% probability.)

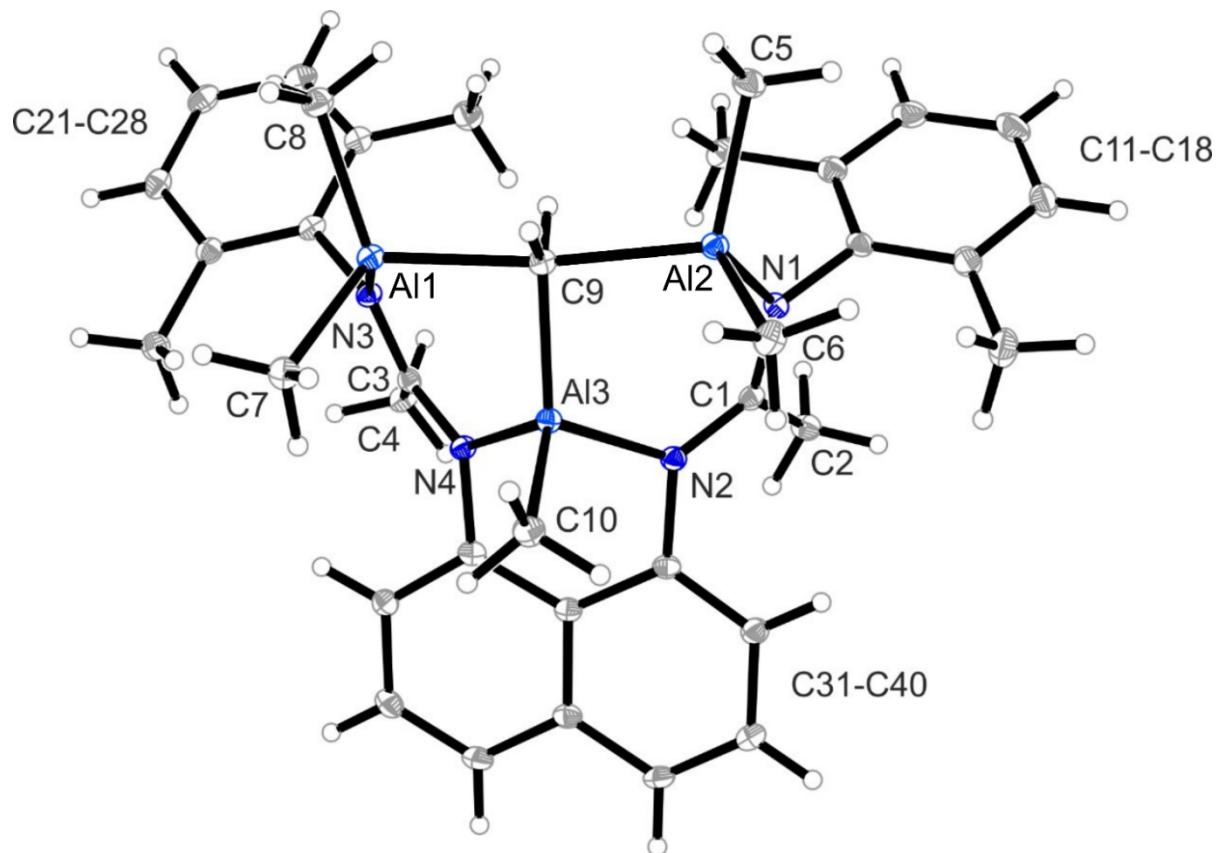


Table S1. Crystallographic data and structure refinement of complex **1**.

	1
Empirical formula	C ₃₇ H ₄₉ Al ₃ Cl ₂ N ₄
Formula weight	701.663 g/mol
Temperature (K)	102(2)
Wavelength (Å)	1.54178
Crystal system	monoclinic
Space group	P2 ₁ /n
a(Å)	9.7351(2)
b(Å)	34.9337(7)
c(Å)	11.2629(2)
α(°)	90
β(°)	95.4670(10)
γ(°)	90
Volume(Å ³)	3812.90(13)
Z	4
Density (calculated) (g/cm ³)	1.222
Absorption coefficient (mm ⁻¹)	2.433
F(000)	1488
Crystal size (mm ³)	0.055 x 0.066 x 0.114
Index ranges	 -11 ≤ h ≤ 11 -41 ≤ k ≤ 42 -12 ≤ l ≤ 13
Reflections collected	54025
Independent reflections	6967 [R(int) = 0.0508]
Data/restraints/parameters	6967 / 49 / 453
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.082
Final R indices [I>2σ(I)]	R1 = 0.0399, wR2 = 0.0995
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0466 wR2 = 0.1032
Largest diff. peak/hole, e.Å ⁻³	0.312 and -0.370

Table S2. Principal bond distances (\AA) for complex **1**.

1 (Bond distances, \AA)			
A11–N1	1.951(17)	A11–C6	1.966(2)
A11–C5	1.974(2)	A11–C9	2.098(2)
A11–A13	2.979(8)	A12–N3	1.948(16)
A12–C8	1.966(2)	A12–C7	1.970(2)
A12–C9	2.100(2)	A12–A13	2.932(8)
A13–N4	1.921(16)	A13–N2	1.923(16)
A13–C10	1.951(2)	A13–C9	1.958(2)
N1–C1	1.326(2)	N1–C11	1.449(2)
N2–C1	1.343(2)	N2–C31	1.432(2)
N3–C3	1.318(2)	N3–C21	1.450(2)
N4–C3	1.351(2)	N4–C39	1.422(2)
C1–C2	1.509(3)	C2–H2A	0.98
C2–H2B	0.98	C2–H2C	0.98
C3–C4	1.509(3)	C4–H4A	0.98
C4–H4B	0.98	C4–H4C	0.98
C5–H5A	0.98	C5–H5B	0.98
C5–H5C	0.98	C6–H6A	0.98
C6–H6B	0.98	C6–H6C	0.98
C7–H7A	0.98	C7–H7B	0.98
C7–H7C	0.98	C8–H8A	0.98
C8–H8B	0.98	C8–H8C	0.98
C9–H9A	0.95(3)	C9–H9B	0.90(3)
C10–H10A	0.98	C10–H10B	0.98
C10–H10C	0.98	C11–C12	1.399(3)
C11–C16	1.402(3)	C12–C13	1.396(3)
C12–C17	1.509(3)	C13–C14	1.384(3)
C13–H13	0.95	C14–C15	1.381(3)

Table S3. Principal bond angles ($^{\circ}$) for complex **1**.

1 (Bond angles, $^{\circ}$)			
N1–Al1–C6	107.29(8)	N1–Al1–C5	109.28(8)
Al1–C9– Al2	173.10(11)	Al3–C9– Al1	94.47(8)
C6–Al1–C5	116.55(9)	N1–Al1–C9	105.50(7)
C6–Al1–C9	107.03(8)	C5–Al1–C9	110.59(9)
N1–Al1–Al3	80.81(5)	C6–Al1–Al3	146.78(7)
C5–Al1–Al3	89.24(7)	C9–Al1–Al3	40.95(5)
N3–Al2–C8	109.14(8)	N3–Al2–C7	108.19(8)
C8–Al2–C7	115.58(9)	N3–Al2–C9	101.19(7)
C8–Al2–C9	108.51(8)	C7–Al2–C9	113.21(8)
N3–Al2–Al3	82.41(5)	C8–Al2–Al3	150.38(7)
C7–Al2–Al3	84.46(6)	C9–Al2–Al3	41.87(5)
N4–Al3–N2	89.75(7)	N4–Al3–C10	114.23(8)
N2–Al3–C10	108.88(8)	N4–Al3–C9	109.55(8)
N2–Al3–C9	113.23(8)	C10–Al3–C9	117.83(9)
N4–Al3–Al2	75.42(5)	N2–Al3–Al2	142.84(5)
C10–Al3–Al2	108.27(7)	C9–Al3–Al2	45.71(6)
N4–Al3–Al1	135.85(5)	N2–Al3–Al1	76.83(5)
C10–Al3–Al1	109.91(7)	C9–Al3–Al1	44.59(6)
Al2–Al3–Al1	90.30(2)	C1–N1–C11	117.53(15)
C1–N1–Al1	125.70(13)	C11–N1–Al1	116.53(12)
C1–N2–C31	119.72(15)	C1–N2–Al3	130.02(13)
C31–N2–Al3	110.01(12)	C3–N3–C21	119.25(15)
C3–N3–Al2	123.07(13)	C21–N3–Al2	117.36(11)
C3–N4–C39	118.66(15)	C3–N4–Al3	129.64(13)
C39–N4–Al3	111.48(12)	N1–C1–N2	119.51(17)
N1–C1–C2	119.12(17)	N2–C1–C2	121.27(16)
C1–C2–H2A	109.5	C1–C2–H2B	109.5
H2A–C2–H2B	109.5	C1–C2–H2C	109.5
H2A–C2–H2C	109.5	H2B–C2–H2C	109.5

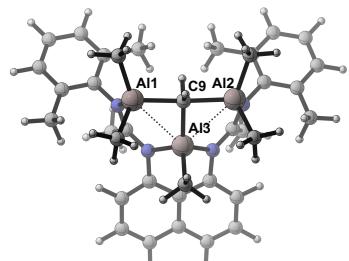
Computational Section

Optimisation of complex **1** was obtained using density functional theory (DFT), employing the wB97XD exchange-correlation functional^{5,6} together with the def2-TZVPP basis set.⁷ All calculations were performed using the Gaussian16 (RevB.01) software package.⁸ Mayer bond order, natural charges, and donor-acceptor second-order perturbation energies were obtained in the natural bond orbital (NBO) basis using the NBO 3.1 software interfaced with Gaussian16. Noncovalent interactions (NCIs) were revealed using the NCI index proposed by Johnson and coworkers through the NCIplot software.^{9,10} A wavefunction file was generated in Gaussian16 to be used as input for the NCIplot program. Atoms in Molecules (AIM)^{11–15} analyses and adaptive natural density partitioning (AdNDP)¹⁶ were performed in Multiwfn¹⁷ using the .wfn generated in Gaussian.

Molecular dynamic simulations were performed using the atom-centred density matrix propagation (ADMP) procedure^{18–20} as implemented in Gaussian16. The dynamic was propagated with a total of 20,000 conformations in a total time of 2.0 ps (2.000 fs) at the wB97XD/6-31G level of theory. Bond distance distributions were computed in Gabedit²¹ using the radial pair distribution function.

Computational Results

Table S4. Comparison between crystal and optimised structures.



Bond	Crystal	M06-2X	wB97XD	BO Wiberg	BO Mayer
Al1-C9	2.098(2)	2.101	2.09696	0.3287	0.4357
Al2-C9	2.100(2)	2.101	2.097	0.3287	0.4357
Al3-C9	1.958(2)	1.974	1.973	0.4113	0.5501
Al1-C9-Al2	173.10(11)	173.27	173.26	--	--

Table S5. Comparison of other Al–C bond distances in similar Al₃-(μ³-CH₂) moieties.

System	Al–C	Al–C	Al–C	Ref
4 , [(Cp* ² Zr) ₃ Al ₆ Me ₈ (CH) ₅ (CH ₂) ₂]	2.028(7) Al1–C10	2.128(6) Al2–C10	2.003(7) Al4–C10	22
11 , [(Cp* ² Hf) ₃ Al ₆ Me ₈ (μ ³ -CH ₂) ₂ (μ ⁴ -CH) ₄ (μ ³ -CH)]	2.071(8) Al2–C7	2.063(8) Al5–C7	2.047(8) Al6–C7	23
2 , [Cp* ² UAl ₃ (μ ³ -CH ₂)(μ ² -CH ₃) ₂ (CH ₃) ₇]	2.076(6) Al1–C25	2.018(6) Al2–C25	2.104(6) Al3–C25	24
4 , Me ₃ Al(μ ³ -CH ₂)(AlMe ₂) ₂ (μ ² -CH ₃) ⁻	2.061(3) Al1–C17	1.991(3) Al2–C17	2.128(3) Al3–C17	25
Me ₃ Al(μ ³ -CH ₂)(AlMe ₂) ₂ (μ ² -CH ₃) ⁻	2.081 Al1–C9	2.007 Al2–C9	2.125 Al3–C9	26
This work	2.098(2) Al1–C9	2.100(2) Al2–C9	1.958(2) Al3–C9	

QTAIM

Topological analysis based on the quantum theory of atoms in molecules (QTAIM)^{11–15} was used to expose the formation of the pentacoordinate carbon atom. The Bond critical points (BCPs), density at the BCPs, and Mayer bond orders are shown for discussions in Figure S5. In contrast, density and Laplacian of the electron density are quoted in Figure S6. Although BCPs have been somewhat questioned in the hunt for covalent bonds,^{27,28} the appearance of five BCPs and five bond paths around carbon reveals its pentacoordinate. Mainly, BCPs for the C–H bonds show large electron densities (~0.26 a.u.), typical for 2e-covalent bonds, with bond orders larger than 0.7.

Moreover, the negative values from the Laplacian of the electron density at the C–H BCPs corroborate the full covalent nature of these interactions (see Figure S6). Conversely, Although BCPs were observed for the Al–C contacts, the low electron density and positive values for the Laplacian of the electron density at the BCPs reveal that these interactions are dominated by an essential electrostatic contribution. However, the QTAIM results show that the Al₃–C bond is inherently different from the Al1–C with the Al2–C bonds. A higher covalency is observed for the former by a more significant electron density (0.077 a.u.) found at the BCP and supported by a larger MBO= 0.550. Although long-range interactions were shown for the Al···Al contacts, no BCPs were found between these atoms. Nonetheless, ring critical points are observed in the two

6-membered C*-Al-N-C-N-Al rings, which are rather crucial in stabilising the methyldiene moiety.

Figure S8. Laplacian of the electron density map and bond critical points (BCPs) in blue balls around the pentacoordinate carbon atom. Value of the density at BCPs (a.u.) and Mayer bond orders MBOs (in parenthesis).

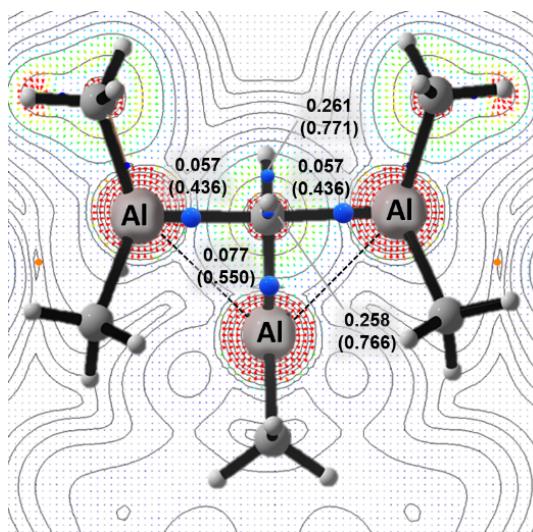


Figure S9. Key bond critical points (BCPs) on the molecular structure. Density and Laplacian of the electron density at each BCP. Values in atomic units (a.u.).

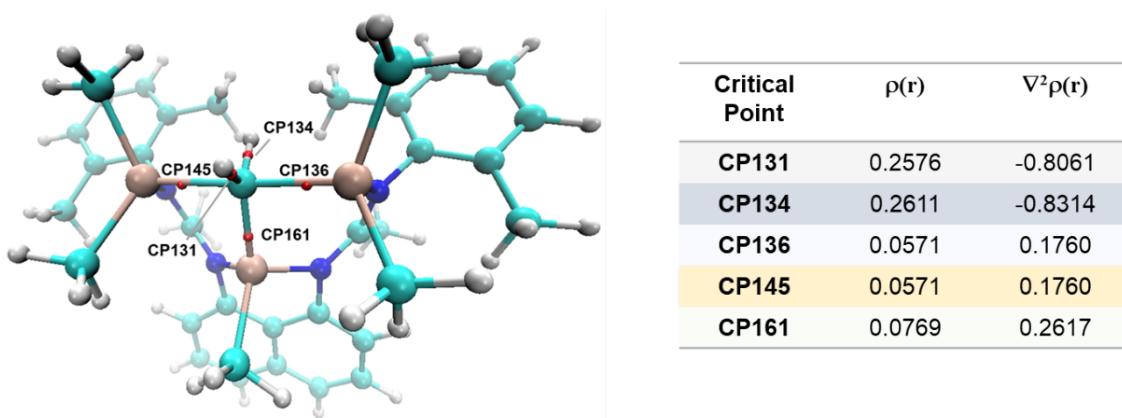


Figure S10. Bond and ring critical points together with bond paths are shown for complex **1**.

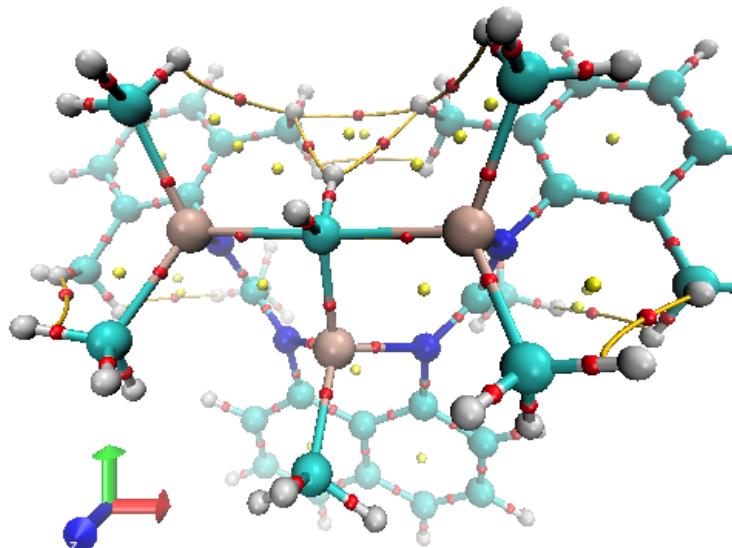


Figure S11. Superposition of molecular structures obtained at the wB97XD/6-31G and wB97XD/def2-TZVPP (quadrants). RMSD = 0.0372 (including hydrogens). The similarity of both structures supports the choice of the methodology for the dynamic simulation.

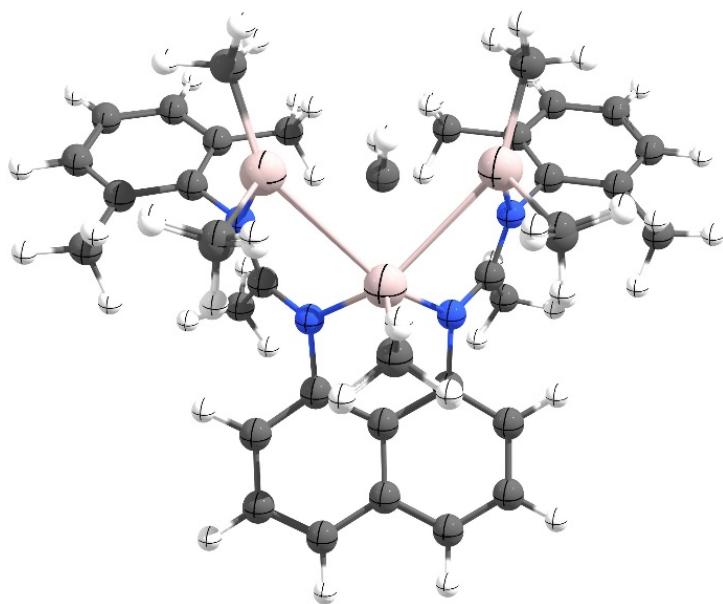
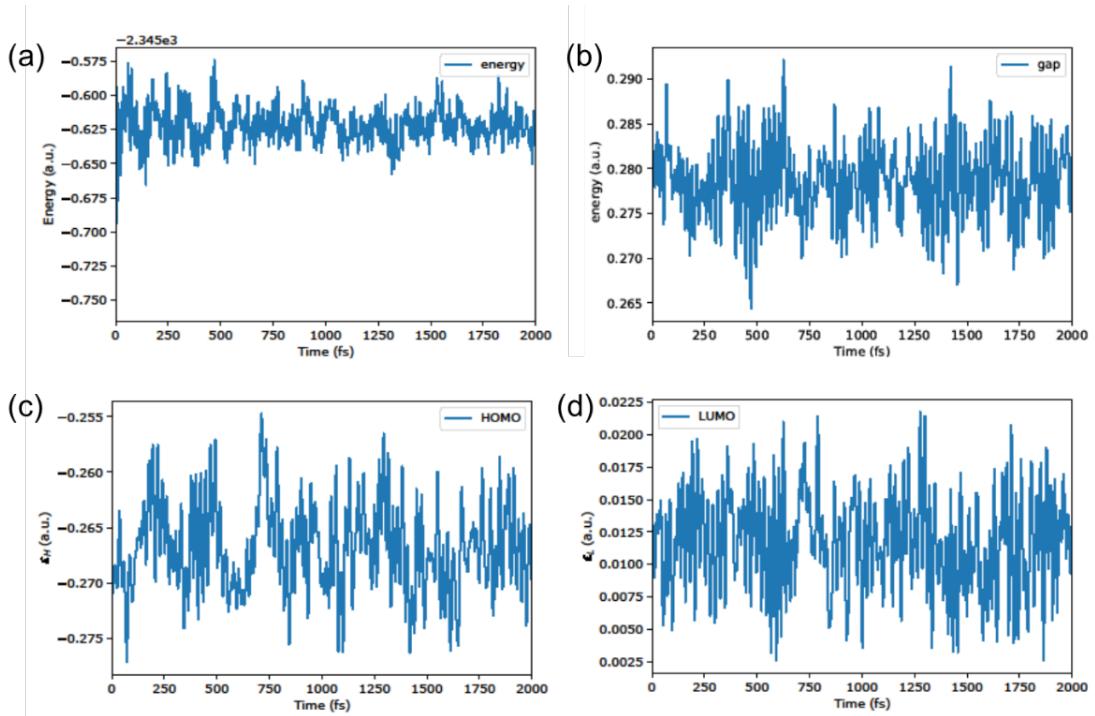


Figure S12. Results from trajectory. (a) total energy, (b) HOMO-LUMO gap, (c) HOMO energy (d) LUMO energy.



XYZ coordinates

wB97XD/def2TZVPP

Energy -2346.82916816 au
AI 2.090723 -1.112903 1.871317
AI -2.090820 -1.112843 1.871341
AI -0.000008 0.876803 1.338150
N 2.614161 -0.645103 0.041250
N 1.353121 1.271894 0.010343
N -2.614231 -0.645006 0.041270
N -1.353118 1.271946 0.010343
C 2.237871 0.458892 -0.571673
C 2.760087 0.746382 -1.956805
H 3.816625 1.010835 -1.937744
H 2.209034 1.550742 -2.431030
H 2.676040 -0.158801 -2.555954
C -2.237873 0.458950 -0.571679
C -2.759955 0.746345 -1.956884
H -2.675893 -0.158897 -2.555942
H -2.208820 1.550634 -2.431131
H -3.816480 1.010849 -1.937947
C 2.811238 0.269306 3.086488
H 3.808101 -0.016614 3.435816
H 2.194760 0.399131 3.979849
H 2.903283 1.256363 2.625642
C 2.640057 -2.976952 2.168588
H 2.196349 -3.688719 1.467428
H 2.360985 -3.308306 3.173297
H 3.724830 -3.093093 2.088463
C -2.811255 0.269330 3.086584
H -2.902214 1.256716 2.626231
H -2.195340 0.398175 3.980479
H -3.808590 -0.016011 3.435038
C -2.640230 -2.976864 2.168648
H -3.725017 -3.092934 2.088620
H -2.361090 -3.308234 3.173333
H -2.196635 -3.688665 1.467453
C -0.000047 -1.039866 1.783668
H -0.000046 -1.433854 2.808499
H -0.000068 -1.878568 1.081236
C 0.000105 2.224408 2.750397
H -0.879844 2.869458 2.693786
H 0.881319 2.867838 2.695119
H -0.001077 1.768574 3.742463
C 3.572033 -1.502155 -0.587386
C 4.933287 -1.260130 -0.385533
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H 6.909950 -1.953367 -0.809527
C 5.434803 -3.214648 -1.710669
H 6.163276 -3.884246 -2.147948
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H 6.485295 -0.054572 0.472356
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H 1.494845 -3.693272 -2.181279
H 1.163990 -1.976156 -1.940742
H 1.190365 -3.058880 -0.564079
C -3.572088 -1.502054 -0.587399
C -4.933350 -1.260065 -0.385548
C -5.852397 -2.129640 -0.960301
H -6.909994 -1.953346 -0.809556
C -5.434813 -3.214552 -1.710749
H -6.163268 -3.884155 -2.148049
C -4.082732 -3.443691 -1.894728
H -3.752301 -4.294988 -2.476470
C -3.135637 -2.596348 -1.335160
C -5.398198 -0.098223 0.446108
H -5.034534 -0.172169 1.471169
H -6.485399 -0.054684 0.472518
H -5.033589 0.854247 0.056981
C -1.669965 -2.846161 -1.520445
H -1.190392 -3.058877 -0.564219
H -1.164021 -1.975857 -1.940649
H -1.494849 -3.692929 -2.181553
C 1.268768 2.625704 -0.389833
C 2.423756 3.361397 -0.499181

H	3.366880	2.878228	-0.282192
C	2.408571	4.714633	-0.860666
H	3.342386	5.252776	-0.951994
C	1.220700	5.345811	-1.068580
H	1.189292	6.394161	-1.334658
C	0.000073	4.652120	-0.906410
C	-1.220526	5.345853	-1.068617
H	-1.189073	6.394202	-1.334692
C	-2.408424	4.714718	-0.860733
H	-3.342218	5.252892	-0.952086
C	-2.423666	3.361482	-0.499242
H	-3.366812	2.878354	-0.282263
C	-1.268709	2.625745	-0.389867
C	0.000043	3.268145	-0.566286

wB97XD/6-31G

Energy -2345.75598279 au

Al	2.130197	-1.097247	1.892885
Al	-2.130137	-1.097298	1.892891
Al	0.000008	0.881331	1.353569
N	2.629713	-0.651418	0.035072
N	1.358845	1.286476	-0.005873
N	-2.629692	-0.651456	0.035091
N	-1.358853	1.286452	-0.005855
C	2.246919	0.461005	-0.591431
C	2.777561	0.741888	-1.981800
H	3.841048	0.997478	-1.964165
H	2.232750	1.554610	-2.458503
H	2.681175	-0.163374	-2.587302
C	-2.246923	0.460981	-0.591406
C	-2.777663	0.741980	-1.981713
H	-2.681309	-0.163219	-2.587312
H	-2.232896	1.554759	-2.458372
H	-3.841152	0.997559	-1.963977
C	2.837132	0.344878	3.073626
H	3.817948	0.056432	3.476599
H	2.178631	0.534549	3.931030
H	2.960883	1.298141	2.542765
C	2.689435	-2.971861	2.207506
H	2.240297	-3.674048	1.493012
H	2.403515	-3.300312	3.215972
H	3.779440	-3.077793	2.123203
C	-2.837084	0.344800	3.073658
H	-2.960874	1.298061	2.542803
H	-2.178566	0.534487	3.931046
H	-3.817883	0.056328	3.476656
C	-2.689317	-2.971931	2.207500
H	-3.779320	-3.077898	2.123207
H	-2.403376	-3.300379	3.215960
H	-2.240163	-3.674097	1.492995
C	0.000030	-1.042281	1.815900
H	0.000033	-1.422670	2.851731
H	0.000040	-1.880564	1.105352
C	0.000001	2.286522	2.733648
H	-0.887561	2.924881	2.643181
H	0.887544	2.924907	2.643166
H	0.000016	1.860339	3.743448
C	3.587193	-1.529660	-0.586818
C	4.958727	-1.297685	-0.379802
C	5.878085	-2.187350	-0.945944
H	6.939181	-2.019588	-0.791088
C	5.448591	-3.281690	-1.693374
H	6.173709	-3.964385	-2.122399
C	4.086183	-3.500797	-1.883114
H	3.747920	-4.356360	-2.459001
C	3.139331	-2.632623	-1.331315
C	5.430096	-0.130088	0.451709
H	5.042863	0.824799	0.078196
H	6.521649	-0.072783	0.454212
H	5.091329	-0.218206	1.489114
C	1.664947	-2.869740	-1.515230
H	1.480079	-3.725350	-2.170081
H	1.165156	-1.995451	-1.946589
H	1.182141	-3.068146	-0.552449
C	-3.587172	-1.529713	-0.586780
C	-4.958707	-1.297707	-0.379805
C	-5.878067	-2.187387	-0.945923
H	-6.939164	-2.019599	-0.791103
C	-5.448573	-3.281774	-1.693284
H	-6.173691	-3.964480	-2.122289
C	-4.086163	-3.500914	-1.882979
H	-3.747901	-4.356515	-2.458808

C -3.139311 -2.632725 -1.331204
C -5.430078 -0.130055 0.451625
H -5.091388 -0.218148 1.489057
H -6.521629 -0.072696 0.454050
H -5.042772 0.824798 0.078100
C -1.664925 -2.869887 -1.515058
H -1.182143 -3.068188 -0.552245
H -1.165108 -1.995658 -1.946509
H -1.480058 -3.725575 -2.169807
C 1.273797 2.651861 -0.406398
C 2.439938 3.386826 -0.522446
H 3.384797 2.899474 -0.308570
C 2.424698 4.749468 -0.879615
H 3.361149 5.287390 -0.973353
C 1.228116 5.387775 -1.080170
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C -0.000051 4.691258 -0.917895
C -1.228240 5.387726 -1.080217
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H -3.361275 5.287252 -0.973497
C -2.440004 3.386733 -0.522524
H -3.384851 2.899338 -0.308687
C -1.273836 2.651826 -0.406405
C -0.000028 3.297865 -0.580243

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