

Supplementary Information for

**C–H Activation-Enabled Synthesis of A Piperazine-
Embedded Azadibenzo[*a,g*]corannulene Analogue**

Lin Huang,^{a,b,c} Mengyu Qiu,^{a,b,c} Zhihao Chang,^{a,b,c} Duncan L. Browne,^d
and Jianhui Huang*^{a,b,c}

^a School of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology (SPST), Tianjin University, 92 Weijin Road, Nankai District, Tianjin 300072, P. R. China

^b Collaborative Innovation Center of Chemical Science and Engineering, Tianjin 300072, China

^c Tianjin Key Laboratory for Modern Drug Delivery & High-Efficiency, Tianjin University, Tianjin 300072, China

^d Department of Pharmaceutical and Biological Chemistry, University College London (UCL), School of Pharmacy, 29-39 Brunswick Square, Bloomsbury, London, WC1N 1AX, UK

*To whom correspondence should be addressed.
E-mail: jhuang@tju.edu.cn (J. Huang).

Table of contents

1. General materials and methods	S2
2. Synthesis and characterization	S3
3. X-ray crystal data	S7
4. ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra	S9
5. References	S18

1. General materials and methods

Unless otherwise stated, all chemicals were of reagent grade or higher, obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification. Flash chromatography was performed on silica gel 200–300 mesh or neutral Al₂O₃. Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on glass backed plates pre-coated with silica (GF254), which were developed using standard visualizing agents.

¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded on a 400 MHz or 600 MHz BRUKER AVANCE spectrometer at 298 K. Chemical shifts(δ) are reported in ppm with the solvent resonance as the internal standard (CDCl₃ ¹H: δ 7.26, ¹³C: δ 77.16; CD₂Cl₂ ¹H: δ 5.32, ¹³C: δ 53.84; (CD₃)₂SO ¹H: δ 2.50, ¹³C: δ 39.52). Data are reported as follows: chemical shift, multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, q = quartet, br = broad, m = multiplet, sept = septet), integration, coupling constants (J) in Hz.

IR absorption spectra were recorded using a Bruker Tensor II FTIR spectrometer (MCT detector, 4000–400 cm⁻¹ range, resolution of 4 cm⁻¹, averaging by 16 scans).

Melting points were recorded on a national standard melting point apparatus without correction.

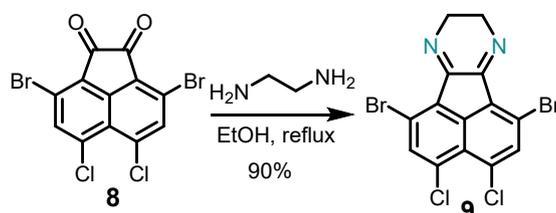
High-resolution mass spectra (HRMS) recorded for accurate mass analysis, were performed on a Q-TOF micro (Bruker Compass Data Analysis 4.0) spectrometer.

Single crystals of compounds suitable for X-ray diffraction were mounted in inert oil and transferred to the cold gas stream of a Rigaku XtaLAB FRX diffractometer equipped with the Hypix6000HE detector. X-ray diffraction intensity data were recorded using mirror-focused Cu $K\alpha$ radiation ($\lambda = 1.54184 \text{ \AA}$) and reduced by using the software package CrysAlisPro, applying an empirical absorption correction. The structure was solved by intrinsic phasing method using SHELXT¹ structure solution program, then refined with the SHELXL² refinement package using Least Squares minimization in and OLEX2.²

2. Synthesis and characterization

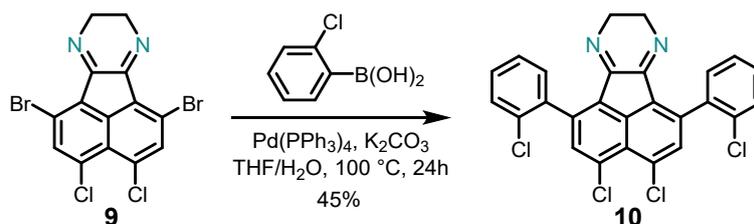
3,8-Dibromo-5,6-dichloroacenaphthenequinone **8** was synthesized according to the reported procedure.³

Synthesis of compound **9**



To a 100 mL round-bottom flask with a condensing unit were added 3,8-dibromo-5,6-dichloroacenaphthenequinone **8** (1.2 g, 3 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), ethylenediamine (0.22 g, 0.24 mL, 3.6 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) and EtOH (20 mL). The resulting mixture was heated to reflux for 5 hours. After cooling to room temperature, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residual was solved to 50 mL DCM then washed with water and dried with anhydrous Na_2SO_4 . After being concentrated through rotary evaporation, the crude product **9** was obtained as a gay solid (1.2 g, 90 %). The crude product was used for next step without further purification. **m. p.** > 300 °C. **¹H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl_3) $\delta = 7.89$ (s, 2H), 4.00 (s, 4H). **¹³C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl_3) $\delta = 156.4, 145.6, 136.5, 133.3, 128.3, 123.7, 116.0, 45.2$. **IR** (KBr) ν [cm^{-1}] 2942, 2841, 1628, 1588, 1564, 1255, 1127, 1005, 966, 876, 852. **HRMS** (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_7\text{Br}_2\text{Cl}_2\text{N}_2$ $\{[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+\}$ 430.8353, found 430.8348.

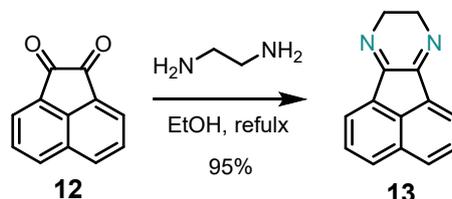
Synthesis of compound **10**



To a 100 mL round-bottom flask with a condensing unit were added 1,6-dibromo-3,4-dichloro-8,9-dihydroacenaphtho[1,2-*b*]pyrazine **9** (216 mg, 0.5 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), 2-chloroboronic acid (234 mg, 1.5 mmol, 3 equiv.), $\text{Pd}(\text{PPh}_3)_4$ (57 mg, 10 mol %), Cs_2CO_3 (978 mg, 3 mmol, 6.0 equiv.), THF (12.5 mL) and water (2.5 mL). The solution was purged with argon for 15 min, then heated to 100 °C and stirred at this temperature for 24 hours. The reaction mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. Afterwards, the reaction mixture was diluted with water, and extracted with EtOAc (15 mL \times 3). The combined organic layers were washed with brine, dried over anhydrous Na_2SO_4 , and filtered, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography (silica, hexane/EtOAc 8:2) to obtain desired compound **10** (110 mg, 45%) as a solid. **m. p.** 80–82 °C. **¹H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl_3) $\delta = 7.70$ (s, 2H), 7.52–

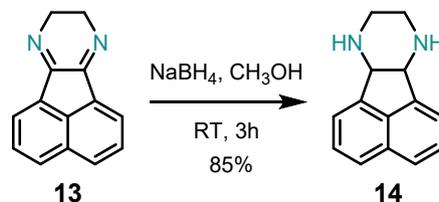
7.50 (m, 2H), 7.44–7.36 (m, 6H), 3.68–3.54 (m, 4H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ = 157.0, 136.0, 134.8, 133.6, 133.1, 131.7, 131.2, 129.8, 129.6, 128.9, 126.6, 124.7, 45.3. A peak is missing in ^{13}C NMR spectrum, possibly due to overlap of peaks. IR (KBr) ν [cm^{-1}] 3212, 3052, 1569, 1479, 1436, 1405, 1332, 1114, 1058, 1035, 1010, 759, 739. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{15}\text{Cl}_4\text{N}_2$ $\{[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+\}$ 494.9989, found 494.9798.

Synthesis of 8,9-dihydroacenaphtho[1,2-*b*]pyrazine **13**



To a 250 mL round-bottom flask with a condensing unit were added acenaphthoquinone (1.82 g, 10 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), ethylenediamine (0.72 g, 0.8 mL, 12 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) and EtOH (60 mL). The resulting mixture was heated to reflux for 4 hours. After cooling to room temperature, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residual was solved to 200 mL DCM then washed with water and dried with anhydrous Na_2SO_4 . After being concentrated through rotary evaporation, the crude product **13** was obtained as a solid. The crude product (1.96 g, 95%) was used for next step without further purification. **m. p.** 86–88 °C. ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ = 7.83 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 4H), 7.59 (dd, J = 8.2, 7.1 Hz, 2H), 3.85 (s, 4H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ = 158.4, 141.3, 131.7, 130.5, 128.4, 128.2, 118.5, 44.9. IR (KBr) ν [cm^{-1}] 3402, 3043, 2938, 2838, 1632, 1433, 1346, 1292, 1118, 964, 825, 778. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{11}\text{N}_2$ $\{[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+\}$ 207.0922, found 207.0920.

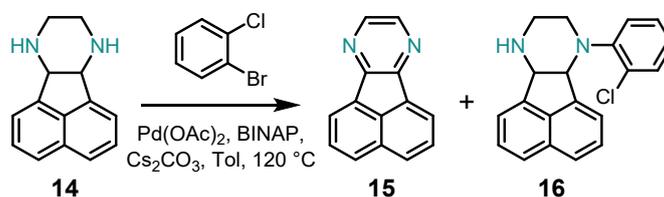
Synthesis of 6b,7,8,9,10,10a-hexahydroacenaphtho[1,2-*b*]pyrazine **14**



To a 250 mL round-bottom flask were added 8,9-dihydroacenaphtho[1,2-*b*]pyrazine **13** (1.9 g, 9.2 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and MeOH (55 mL). NaBH_4 (1.4 g, 37 mmol, 4.0 equiv.) was added in 3 portions over 1 hour to the vigorously stirred solution resulting a color change from colorless to dark blue immediately. After the additions were complete, the solution was stirred at room temperature for 6 hours. When the TLC plate showed all the starting material was consumed, most of the MeOH was removed under reduced pressure then acidified with 1 M HCl to pH neutral. The mixture was extracted with DCM (25 mL \times 3). The combined organic layers were washed with water and brine, dried over Na_2SO_4 , filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified via flash chromatography (silica, $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{MeOH}$ 20:1) to obtain hexahydroacenaphtho[1,2-*b*]pyrazine **14** (1.65 g, 85 %) as a colorless solid. **m. p.** 282–284 °C ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ = 7.71 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.53 (t, J = 6.9 Hz, 2H), 7.47 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 4.55 (s, 2H), 2.94–2.75 (m, 4H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ = 143.7, 137.3, 131.4, 128.1, 124.2, 120.6, 59.1, 42.0. IR (KBr) ν [cm^{-1}] 3196, 2943, 2851, 2750, 2501, 2424, 1669, 1597, 1496, 1461, 1306, 1101, 988, 951,

824, 780, 688. **HRMS** (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{14}H_{15}N_2$ $\{[M+H]^+\}$ 211.1235, found 211.1231.

Synthesis of compounds **15** and **16**

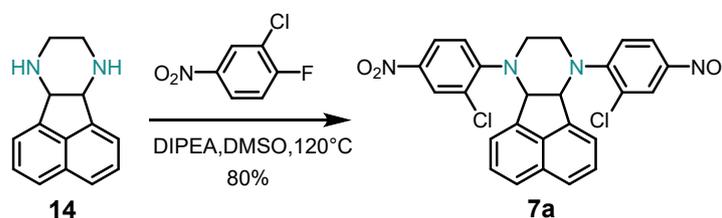


To a 35 mL sealed reaction vessel were added compound **14** (105 mg, 0.5 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), 1-bromo-2-chlorobenzene (210 mg, 1.1 mmol, 128 μ L 2.2 equiv.), Pd(OAc)₂ (12 mg, 10 mol %), BINAP (62 mg, 20 mol %), Cs₂CO₃ (391 mg, 1.2 mmol, 2.4 equiv.), and anhydrous toluene (2.5 mL). The solution was purged with argon for 10 min, then heated to 120 °C and stirred at this temperature for 24 h. The reaction mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature, diluted with DCM (20 mL) and washed with water (10 mL \times 3). The organic layer was dried with anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified via flash chromatography (silica, CH₂Cl₂/MeOH 99:1) to obtain acenaphtho[1,2-*b*]pyrazine **15** (56 mg, 55 %) as a colorless solid and mono-substituted product **16** (14 mg, 9%) as a colorless oil.

acenaphtho[1,2-*b*]pyrazine **15**: **m. p.** 142–143 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ = 8.45 (s, 2H), 8.26 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 2H), 8.03 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.75 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ = 153.9, 141.5, 132.4, 131.8, 129.6, 129.6, 128.4, 122.6. IR (KBr) ν [cm⁻¹] 3850, 3042, 1482, 1430, 1334, 1310, 1118, 823, 774, 438. **HRMS** (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{14}H_9N_2$ $\{[M+H]^+\}$ 205.0766, found 205.0760.

mono-substituted product **16**: ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ = 7.73 (t, J = 4.3 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.58–7.54 (m, 2H), 7.44 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.37 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.30 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.21 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.05 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.95 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 5.55 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 5.02 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 3.10–2.96 (m, 3H), 2.72–2.59 (m, 1H), 2.37 (s, 1H, N-H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ = 148.5, 142.7, 141.5, 138.0, 131.1, 130.9, 128.6, 128.1, 127.7, 127.4, 124.4, 124.0, 123.6, 123.2, 121.7, 121.0, 62.6, 58.6, 45.0, 40.4. **HRMS** (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{20}H_{18}ClN_2$ $\{[M+H]^+\}$ 321.1158, found 321.1153.

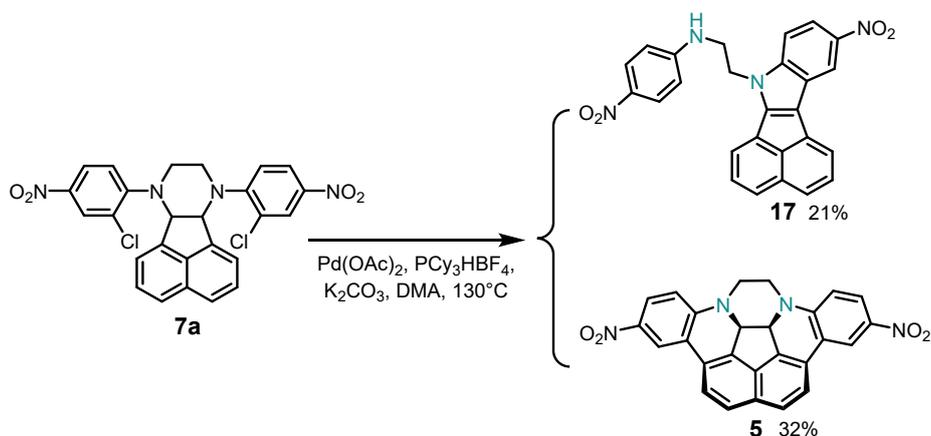
Synthesis of compound **7a**



To a 135 mL sealed reaction vessel were added compound **14** (1.02 g, 4.84 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), 3-chloro-4-fluoronitrobenzene (4.25 g, 24.2 mmol, 5.0 equiv.), DIPEA (4.2 mL, 24.2 mmol, 5.0 equiv.), and anhydrous dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO, 16 mL) under an inert atmosphere. The reaction was heated to 120 °C and stirred at this temperature for 48 h. Then the reaction mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature, diluted with DCM (100 mL) and washed with water for three times. The organic layer was

dried with anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified via column chromatography (silica, hexane/DCM 1:1) to obtain compound **7a** (2.0 g, 80%) as an orange solid. **m. p.** 256–258 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ = 8.35 (d, *J* = 2.6 Hz, 2H), 8.11 (dd, *J* = 8.9, 2.6 Hz, 2H), 7.81 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.53 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.22 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 2H), 7.14 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 6.12 (s, 2H), 3.48–3.37 (m, 2H), 3.21–3.05 (m, 2H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ = 154.1, 142.2, 139.0, 138.2, 131.0, 128.2, 127.0, 126.8, 125.2, 123.2, 121.7, 121.6, 62.4, 43.2. **IR** (KBr) ν [cm⁻¹] 3094, 2917, 285, 1581, 1511, 1498, 1336, 1293, 1254, 1128, 893, 826, 787, 746, 719. **HRMS** (ESI) *m/z* calcd for C₂₆H₁₉Cl₂N₄O₄ {[M+H]⁺} 521.0783, found 521.0786.

Synthesis of compounds **5** and **17**



To a Schlenk tube were added **7a** (156 mg, 0.3 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), Pd(OAc)₂ (67 mg, 0.3 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), PCy₃·HBF₄ (221 mg, 0.6 mmol, 2.0 equiv.), K₂CO₃ (408 mg, 3.0 mmol, 10.0 equiv.) and anhydrous N,N-dimethylacetamide (DMA, 15 mL) via a syringe and argon gas was bubbled to the solution for 10 min. After the bubbling, the solution was heated for 24 h at 130 °C. The crude solution was cooled to room temperature and poured into DCM (40 mL). The organic phase was washed with degassed water (20 mL × 3), dried over Na₂SO₄. After the volatile matters were evaporated under reduced pressure, the crude product was purified via column chromatography (silica, hexane/DCM 1:1) to obtain compound **5** (43 mg, 32%) as a yellow solid, and compound **17** (28 mg, 21%) as a papaya solid. (Note: compound **5** was found to be sensitive to oxygen and moisture in both solution and solid state).

Azacorannulene analogue **5**: ¹H NMR (600 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ = 8.72 (d, *J* = 2.7 Hz, 2H), 8.16 (dd, *J* = 9.2, 2.7 Hz, 2H), 7.97 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.92 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 9.3 Hz, 2H), 5.38 (s, 2H), 4.01–3.92 (m, 2H), 3.87–3.79 (m, 2H). ¹³C NMR (151 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ = 149.0, 138.4, 137.7, 135.9, 132.9, 127.1, 126.0, 125.4, 124.6, 123.0, 119.3, 112.8, 58.2, 43.2. **HRMS** (ESI) *m/z* calcd for C₂₆H₁₇N₄O₄ {[M+H]⁺} 449.1250, found 449.1246.

By-product **17**: **m. p.** 252–254 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ = 8.93 (d, *J* = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 8.20 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 8.02 (dd, *J* = 9.2, 2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.92–7.89 (m, 3H), 7.84 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.78 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.71 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (t, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.38 (t, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 1H, N-H), 6.54 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.83 (t, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 3.84–3.79 (m, 2H). Due to the poor solubility of **17**, no ¹³C NMR spectrum was obtained. **IR** (KBr) ν [cm⁻¹] 3041, 2928, 1600, 1506, 1336, 1321, 1283, 1113, 816, 768, 750. **HRMS** (ESI) *m/z* calcd for C₂₆H₁₇N₄O₄ {[M-H]⁻} 449.1250, found 449.1255.

3. X-ray crystal data

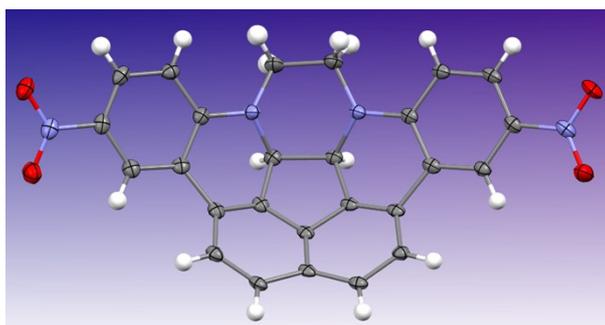


Figure S1. Crystal structure of **5** with thermal ellipsoids of 50% probability.

Table S1. Crystal data of **5**

Identification code	5
Empirical formula	C ₂₆ H ₁₆ N ₄ O ₄
Formula weight	448.43
Temperature/K	100.00(10)
Crystal system	monoclinic
Space group	P2 ₁ /n
a/Å	11.6003(3)
b/Å	7.7459(2)
c/Å	22.1452(6)
α/°	90
β/°	90.835(2)
γ/°	90
Volume/Å ³	1989.63(9)
Z	4
ρ _{calc} /cm ³	1.497
μ/mm ⁻¹	0.856
F(000)	928
Crystal size/mm ³	0.1 × 0.08 × 0.08
Radiation	CuKα (λ = 1.54184)
2θ range for data collection/°	7.986 to 145.214
Index ranges	-12 ≤ h ≤ 13, -9 ≤ k ≤ 9, -27 ≤ l ≤ 25
Reflections collected	10166
Independent reflections	3742 [R _{int} = 0.0559, R _{sigma} = 0.0682]
Data/restraints/parameters	3742/0/307
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.045
Final R indexes [I ≥ 2σ (I)]	R ₁ = 0.0500, wR ₂ = 0.1248
Final R indexes [all data]	R ₁ = 0.0643, wR ₂ = 0.1333
Largest diff. peak/hole / e Å ⁻³	0.21/-0.37

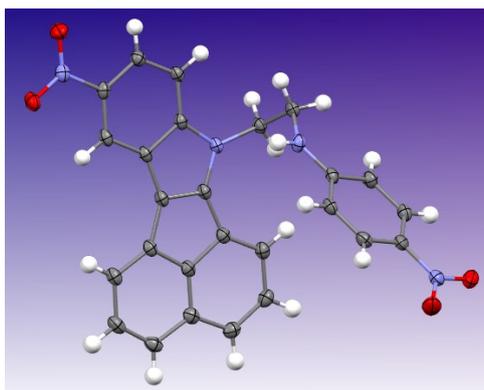


Figure S2. Crystal structure of **17** with thermal ellipsoids of 50% probability.

Table S2. Crystal data of **17**

Identification code	17
Empirical formula	C ₂₆ H ₁₈ N ₄ O ₄
Formula weight	450.44
Temperature/K	100.01(10)
Crystal system	monoclinic
Space group	P2 ₁ /n
a/Å	10.30850(10)
b/Å	9.13480(10)
c/Å	21.6558(3)
α/°	90
β/°	96.3680(10)
γ/°	90
Volume/Å ³	2026.66(4)
Z	4
ρ _{calc} /g/cm ³	1.476
μ/mm ⁻¹	0.84
F(000)	936
Crystal size/mm ³	0.25 × 0.2 × 0.15
Radiation	CuKα (λ = 1.54184)
2θ range for data collection/°	8.216 to 145.382
Index ranges	-11 ≤ h ≤ 12, -11 ≤ k ≤ 10, -26 ≤ l ≤ 26
Reflections collected	24851
Independent reflections	3817 [R _{int} = 0.0453, R _{sigma} = 0.0240]
Data/restraints/parameters	3817/0/307
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.042
Final R indexes [I ≥ 2σ (I)]	R ₁ = 0.0384, wR ₂ = 0.1018
Final R indexes [all data]	R ₁ = 0.0411, wR ₂ = 0.1041
Largest diff. peak/hole / e Å ⁻³	0.20/-0.33

4. ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra

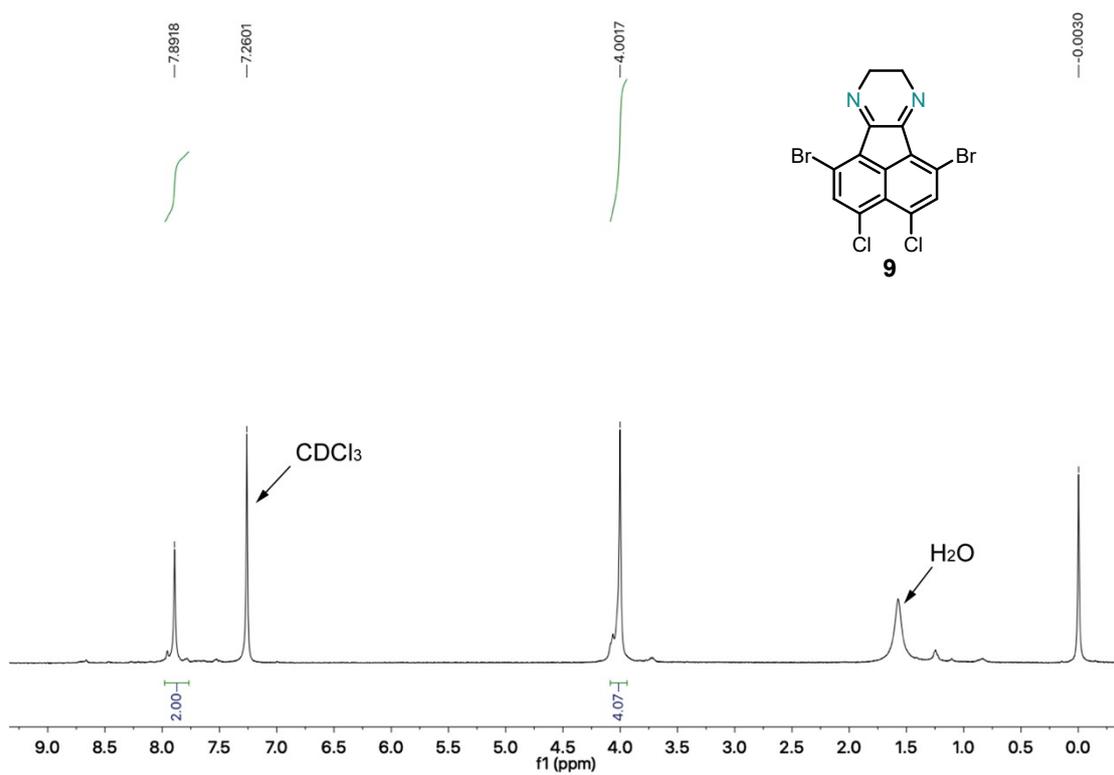


Figure S3. ^1H NMR spectrum of compound **9**.

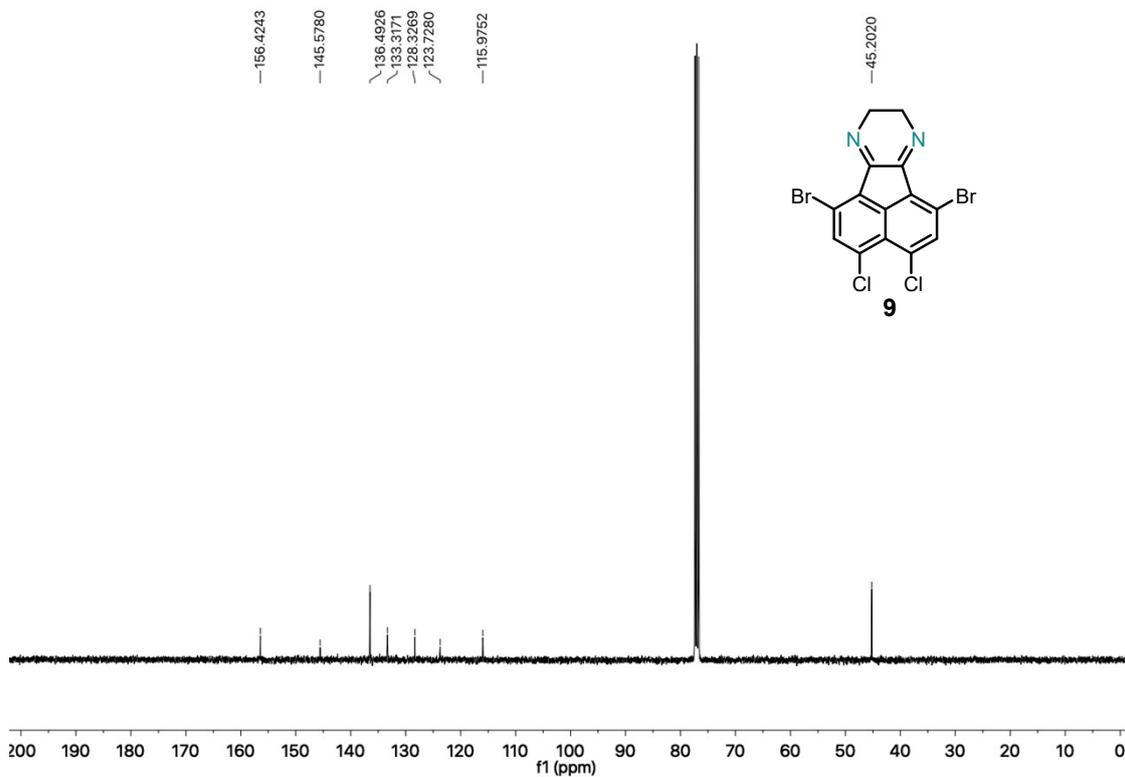
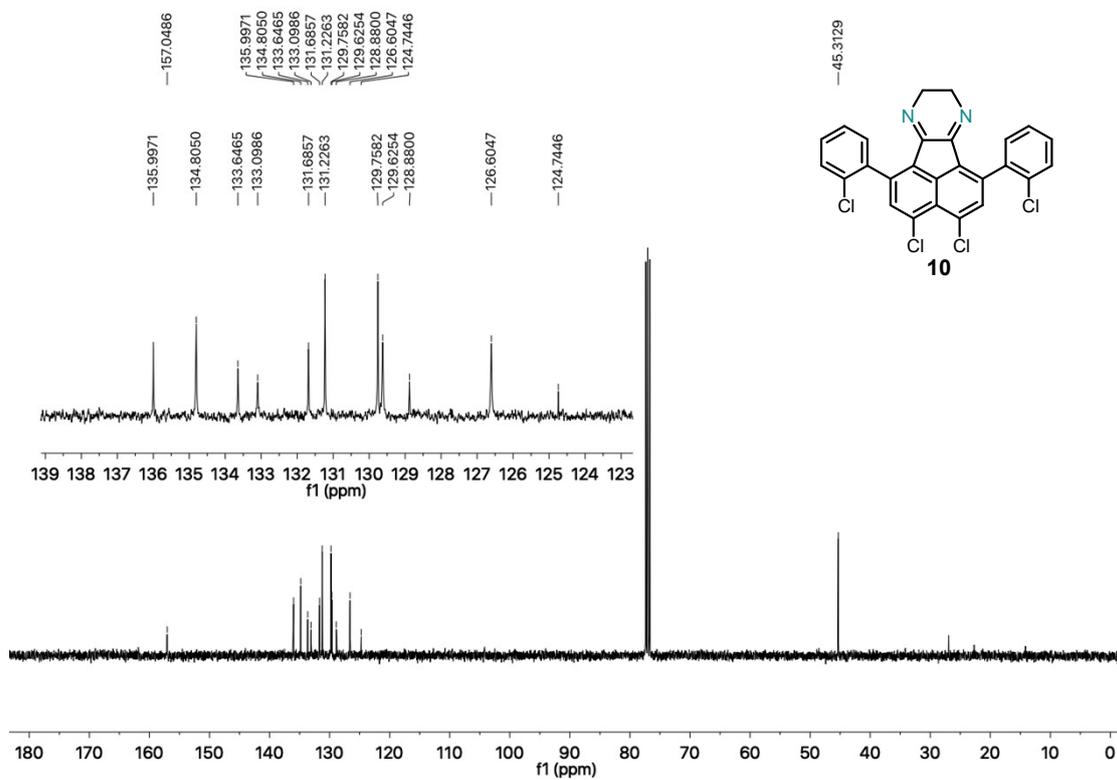
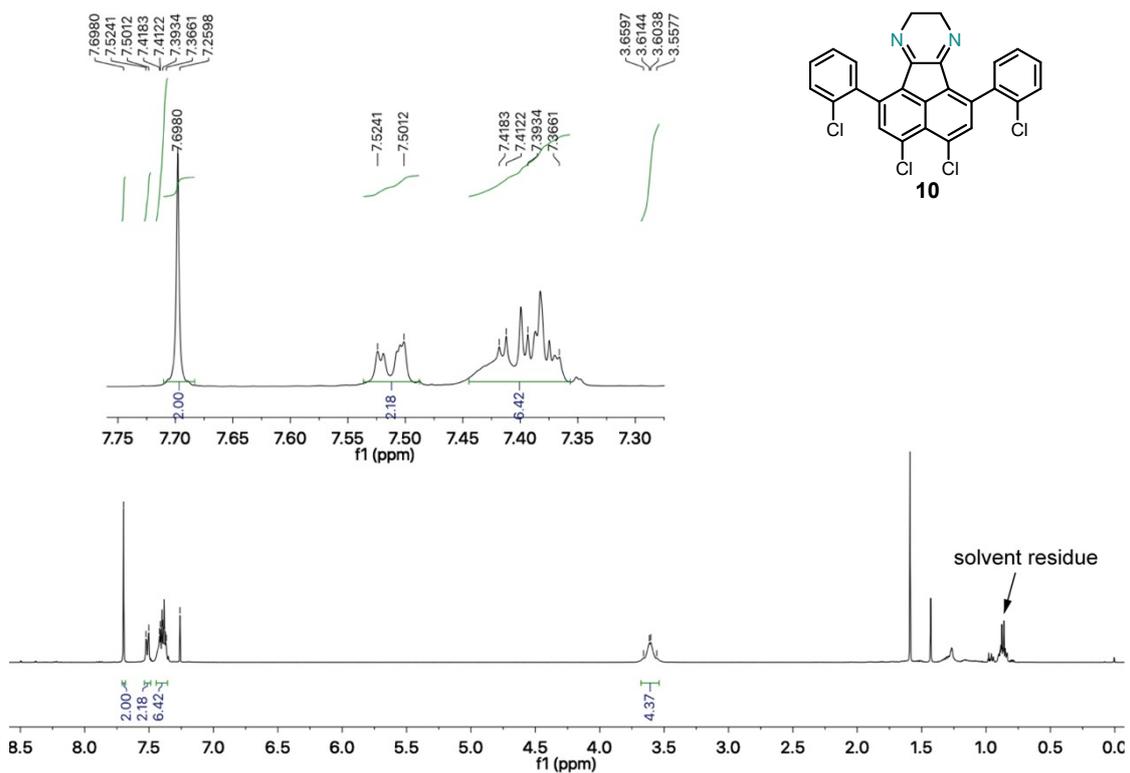


Figure S4. ^{13}C NMR spectrum of compound **9**.



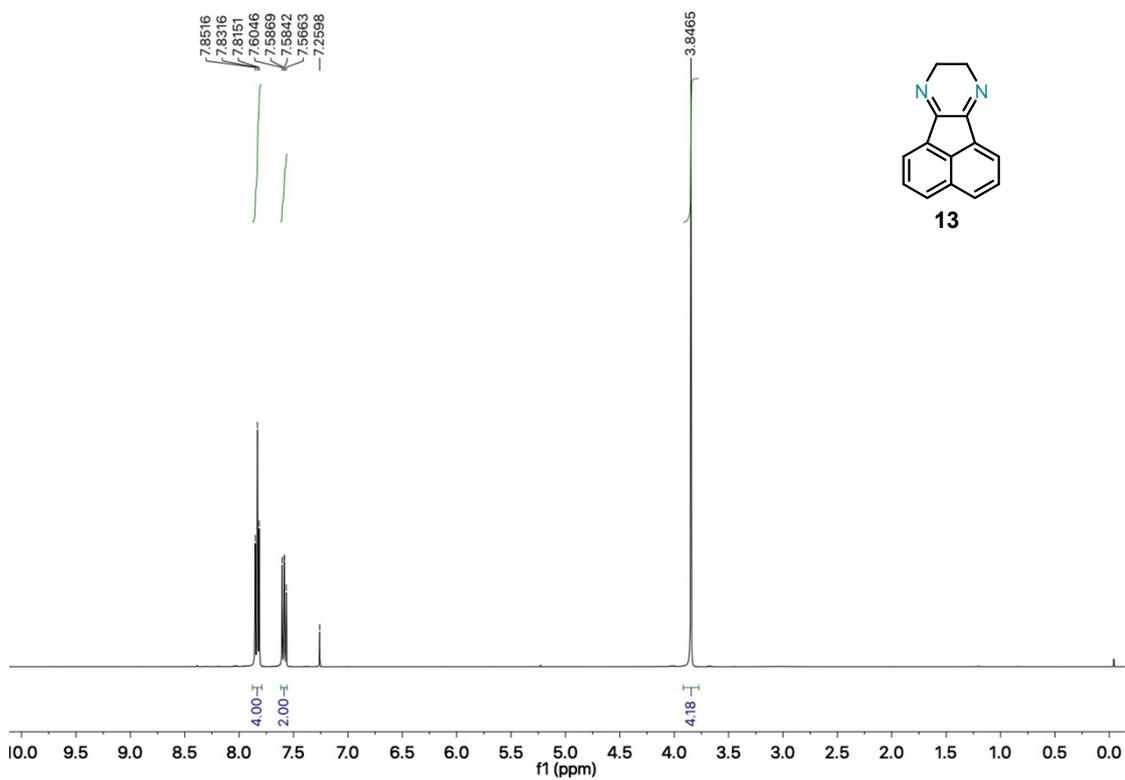


Figure S7. ¹H NMR spectrum of compound **13**.

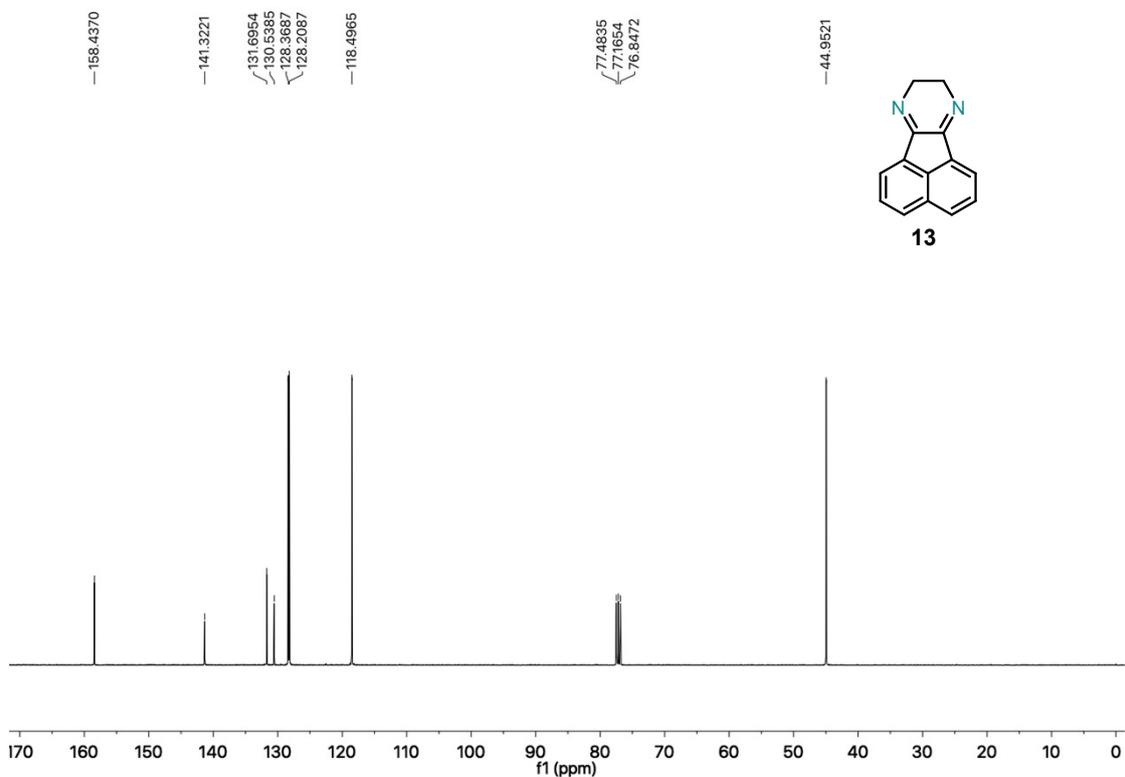
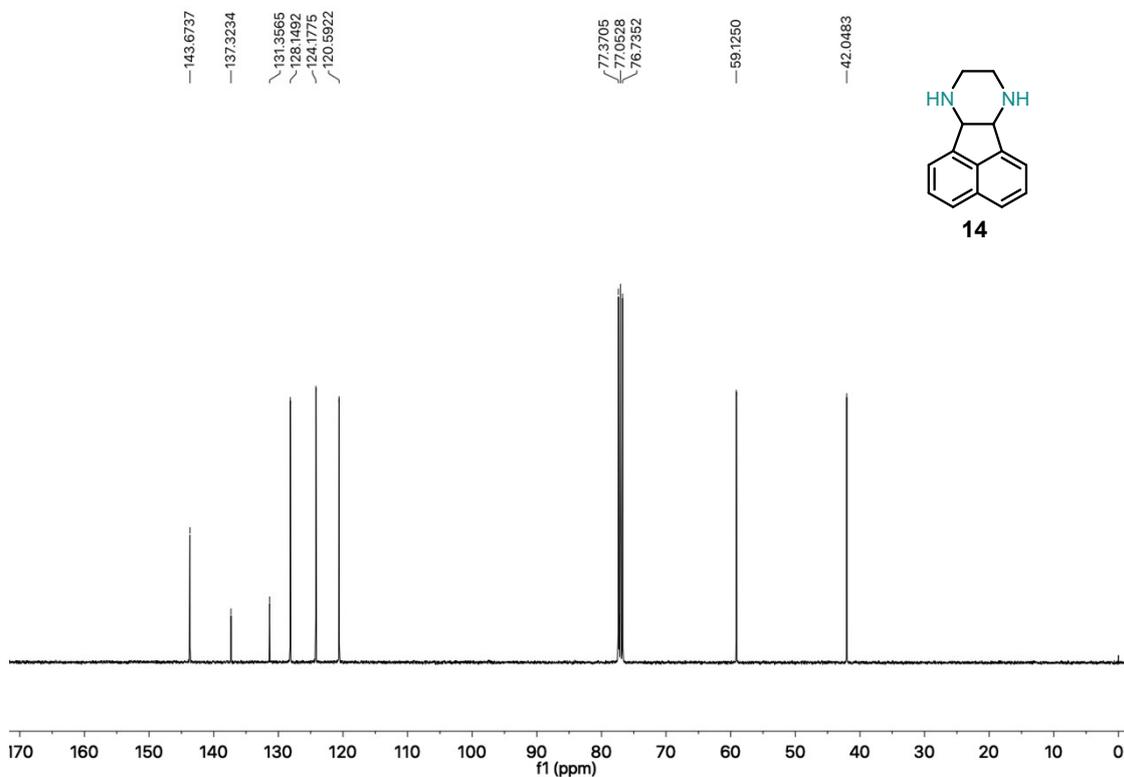
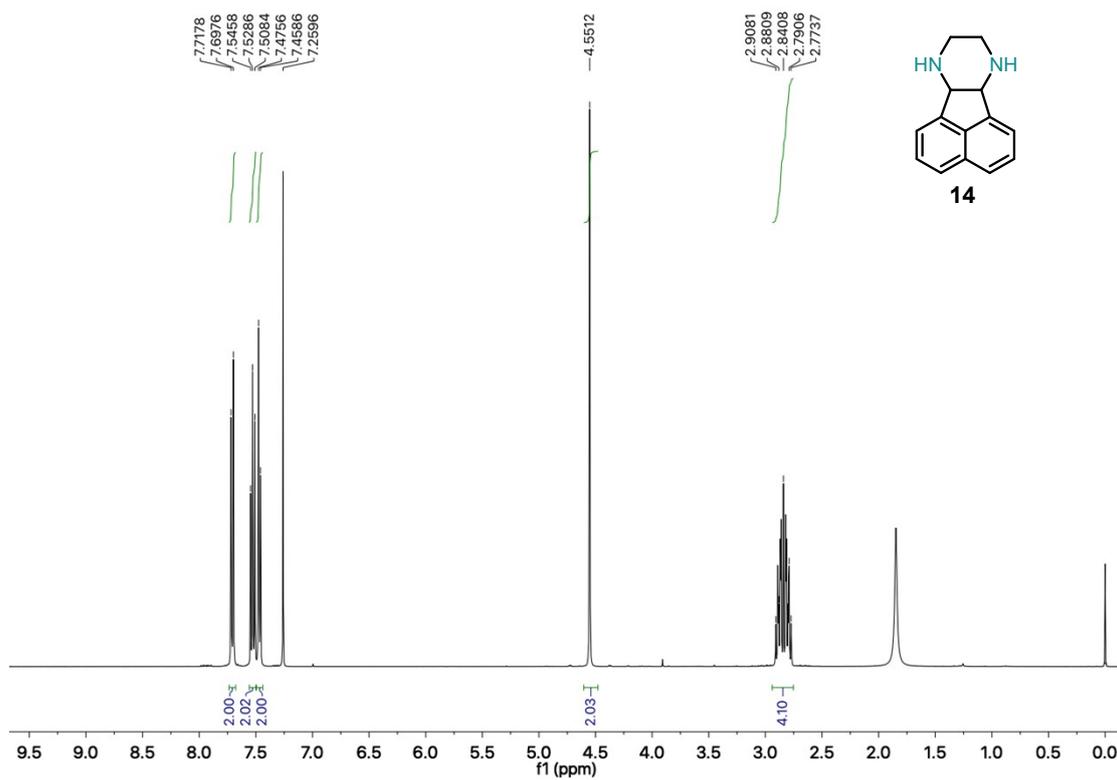


Figure S8. ¹³C NMR spectrum of compound **13**.



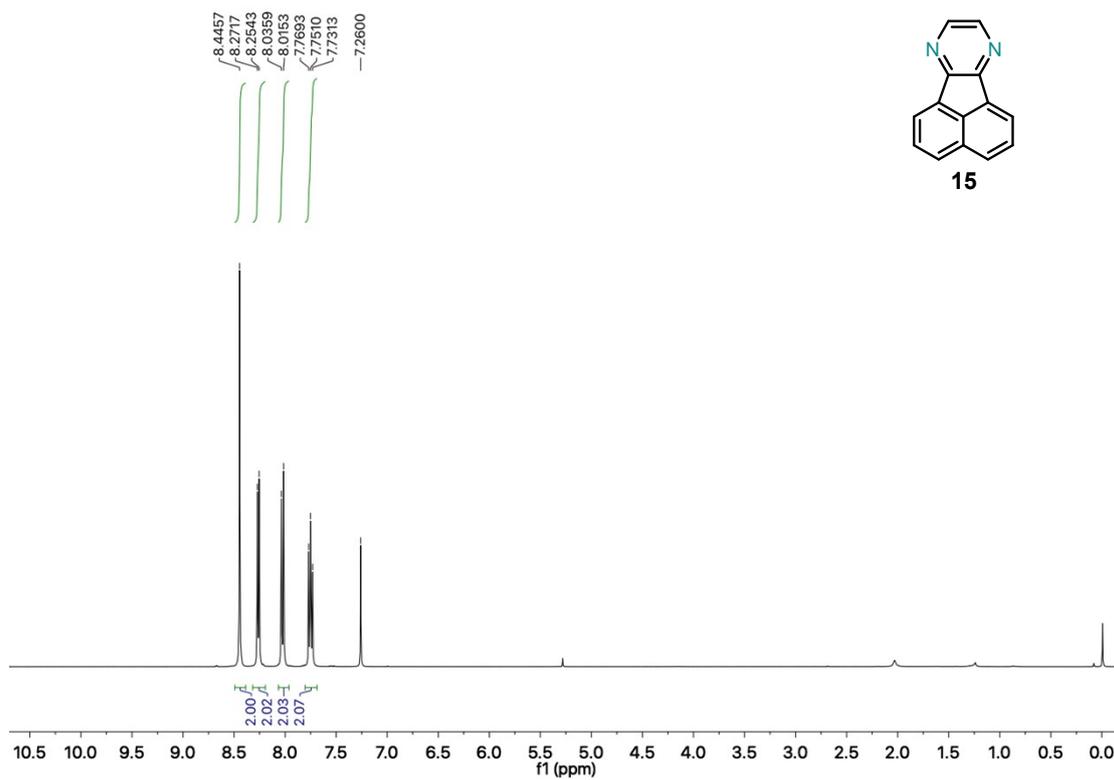


Figure S11. ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 15.

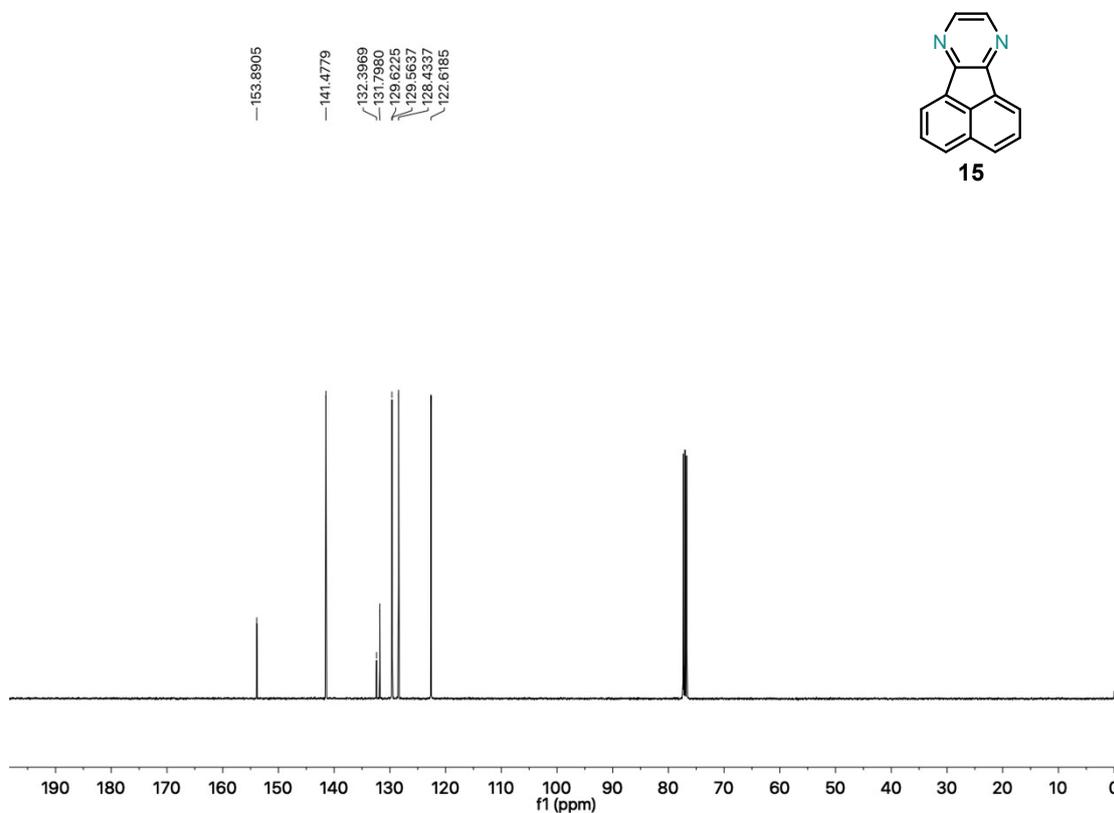


Figure S12. ¹³C NMR spectrum of compound 15.

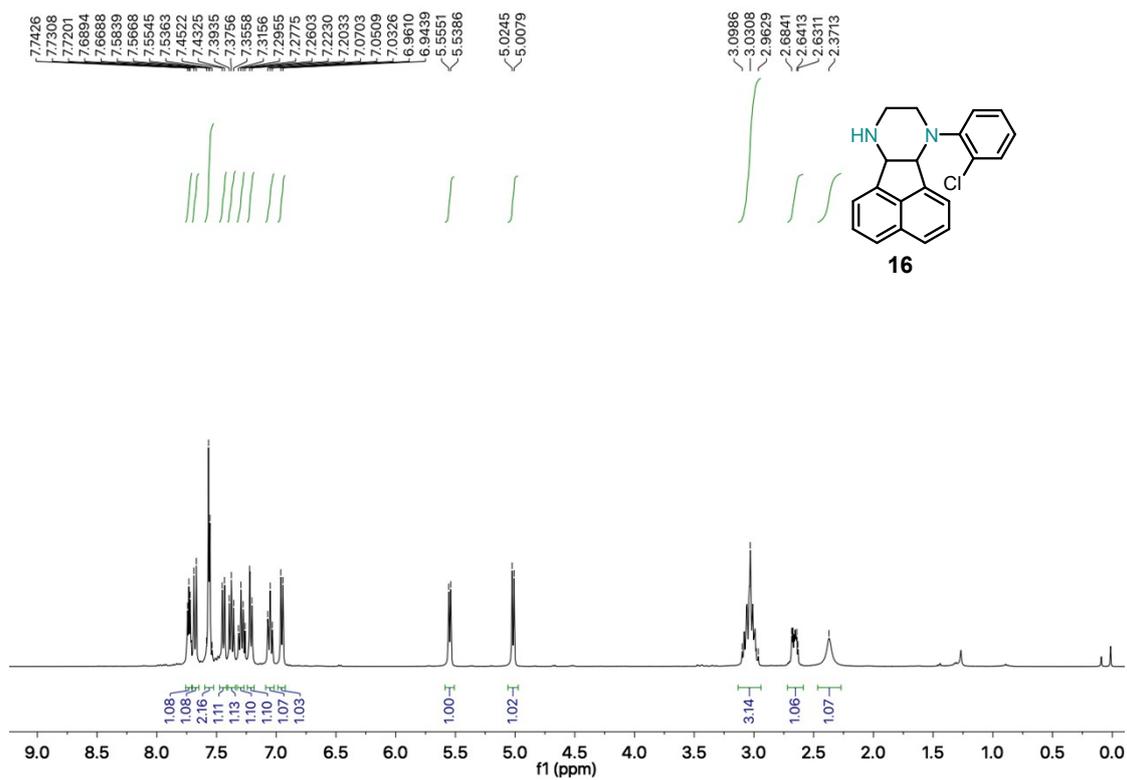


Figure S13. ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 16.

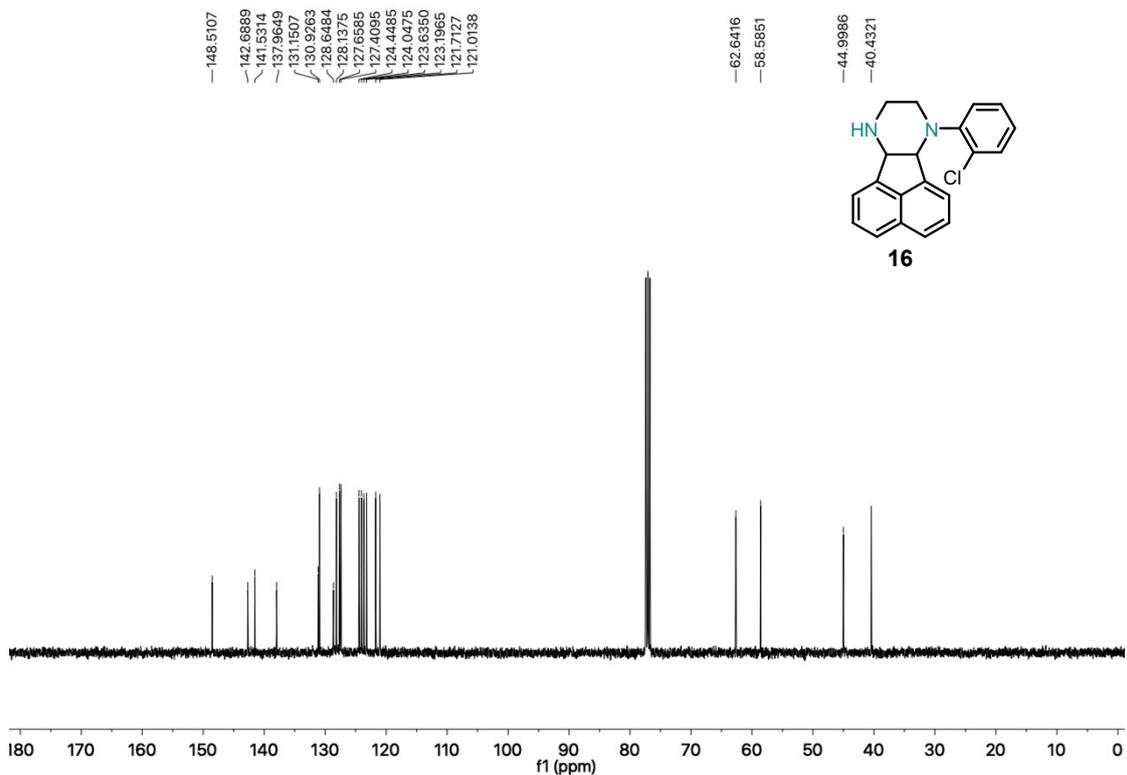


Figure S14. ¹³C NMR spectrum of compound 16.

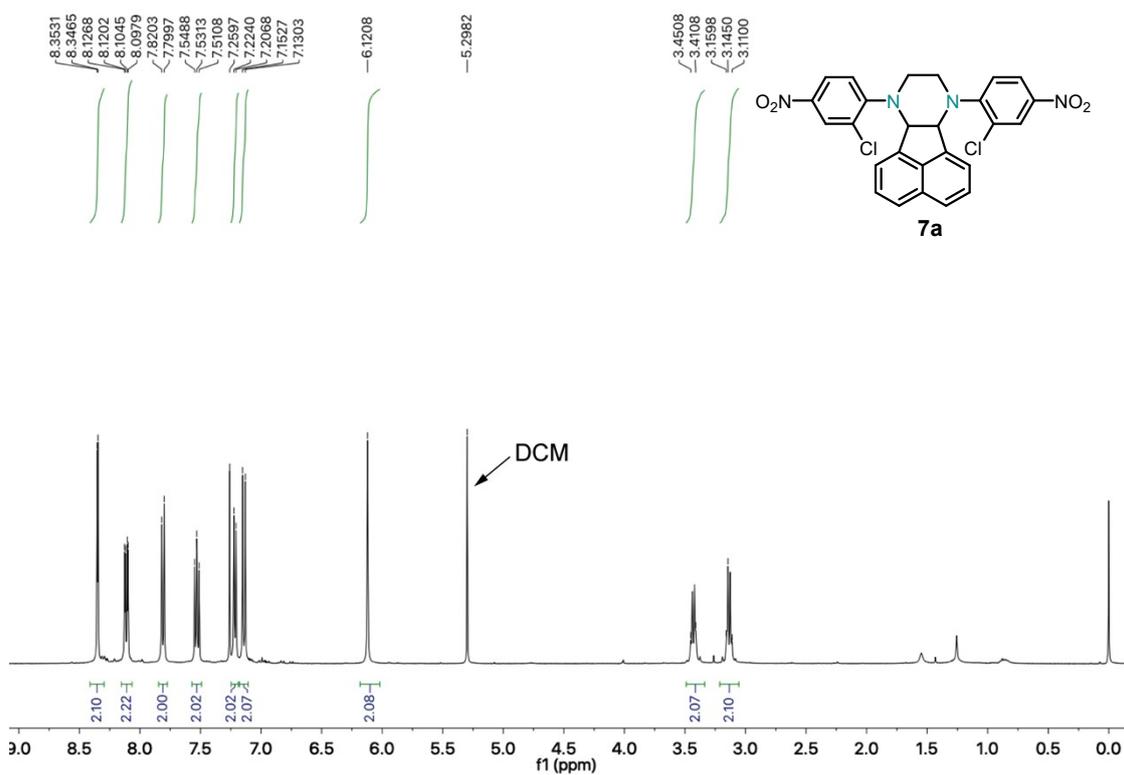


Figure S15. ^1H NMR spectrum of compound **7a**.

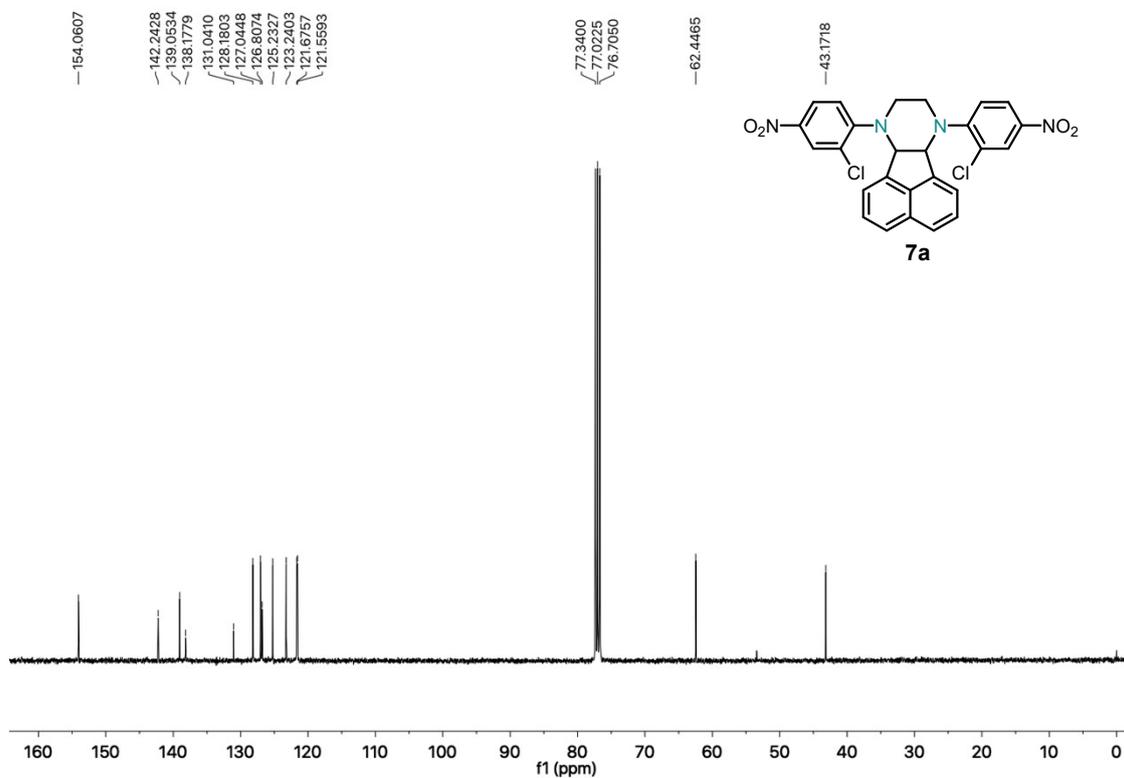


Figure S16. ^{13}C NMR spectrum of compound **7a**.

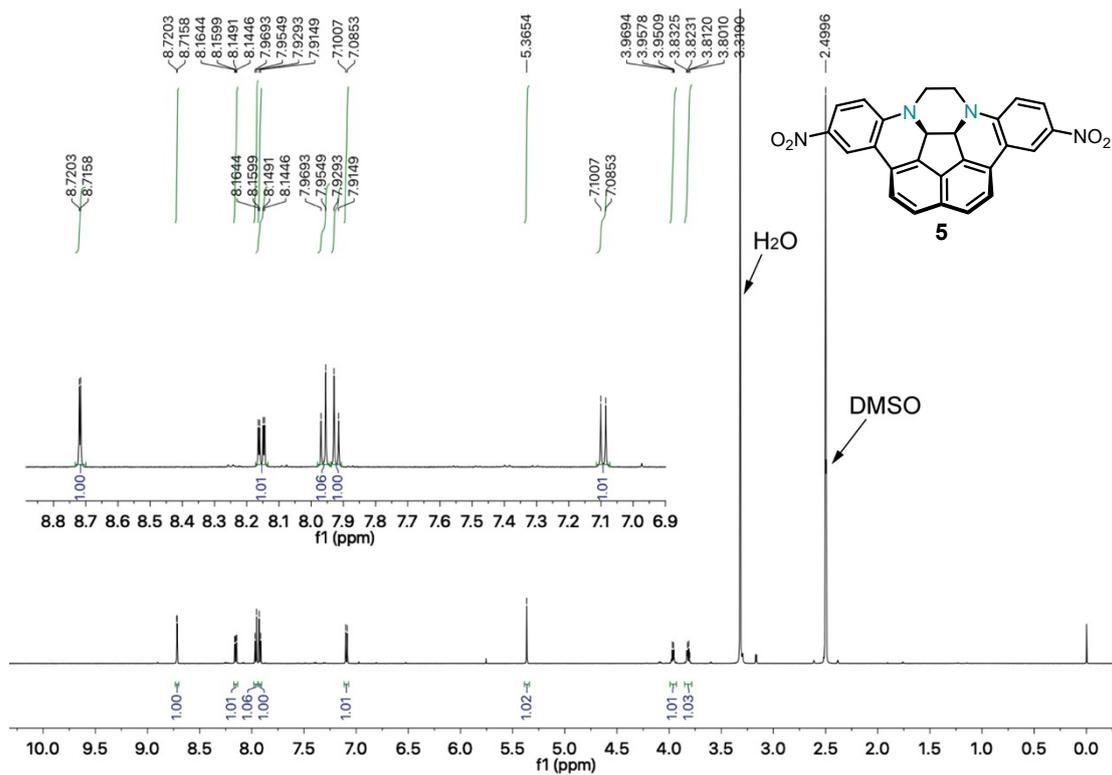


Figure S17. ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 5.

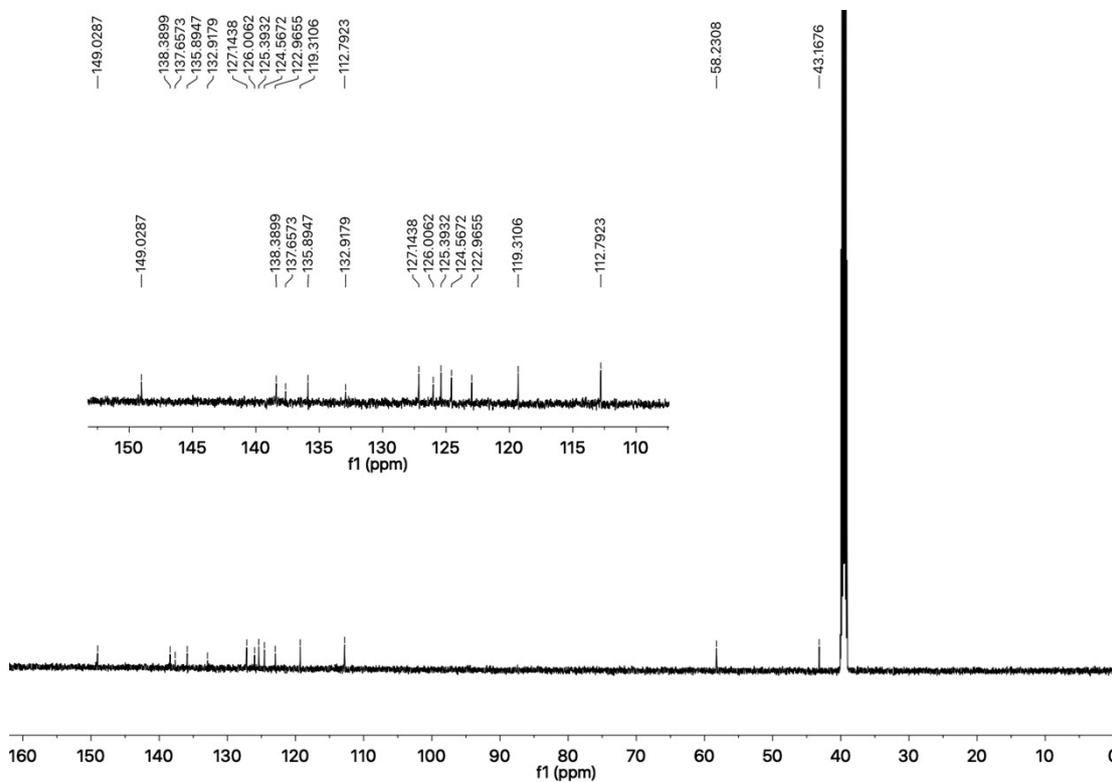


Figure S18. ¹³C NMR spectrum of compound 5.

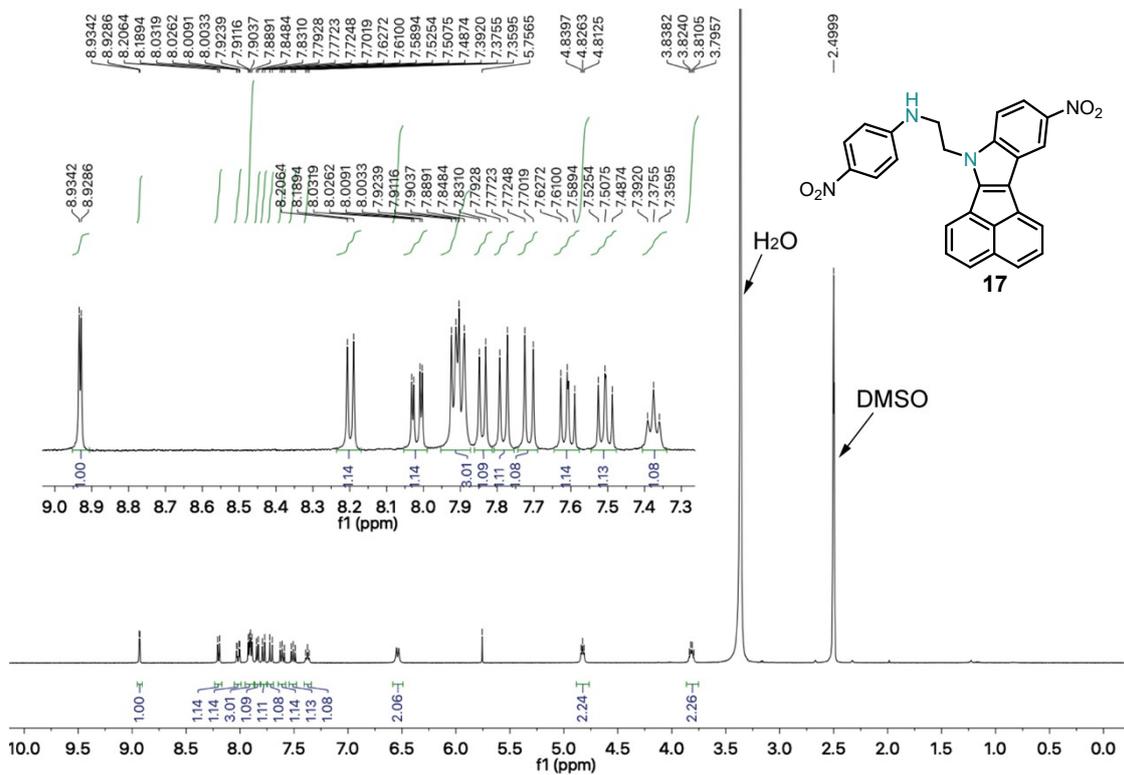


Figure S19. ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 17.

5. References

- (1) G. M. Sheldrick, *Acta Crystallogr. C Struct. Chem.* **2015**, *71*, 3-8.
- (2) O. V. Dolomanov; L. J. Bourhis; R. J. Gildea; J. A. K. Howard; H. Puschmann, *J. Appl. Crystallogr.* **2009**, *42*, 339-341.
- (3) T. J. Seiders; E. L. Elliott; G. H. Grube; J. J. Siegel, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **1999**, *121*, 7804-7813.