

## Supplementary Information

for

# Palladium(II)-Catalyzed Synthesis of Functionalized Indenones via Oxidation and Cyclization of 2-(2-Arylethynylphenyl)acetonitriles

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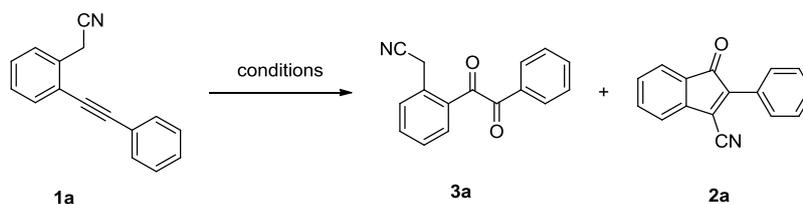
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## General information

Analytical thin layer chromatography (TLC) was HSGF 254 (0.15-0.2 mm thickness, Yantai Huiyou Company, China). Column chromatography was carried out on silica gel (200-300 mesh). Proton and carbon magnetic resonance spectra ( $^1\text{H}$  NMR and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR) were recorded at Varian Mercury-300 and Varian Mercury-500 spectrometers. Tetramethylsilane (TMS) was used as internal standard. Chemical shifts were reported in parts per million (ppm,  $\delta$ ). Proton coupling patterns are described as singlet (s), doublet (d), triplet (t), quartet (q), multipet (m) and broad (br). Low- and high-resolution mass spectra (LRMS and HRMS) were recorded on a Finnigan/MAT-95 (EI), Finnigan LCQ/DECA and Micromass Ultra Q-TOF (ESI) spectrometer. Melting points (m.p.) were measured by Büchi 510 melting point apparatus and were uncorrected.

## Optimization of reaction conditions

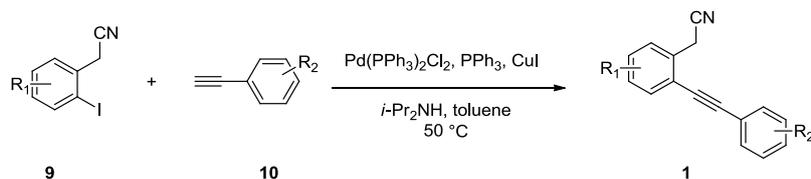
**Table S1** Optimization of reaction conditions for synthesis of indenones in a cascade process.<sup>a</sup>



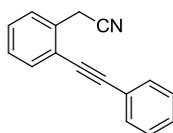
Entry	Catalysts (mol%)	Sulfoxide (3.0 equiv)	Additive (1.2 equiv)	Solvent (1 mL)	Temp (°C)	Time (h)	Yield(%) <sup>b</sup>	
							<b>3a</b>	<b>2a</b>
1	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)	DMSO	none	DMSO	140	15	0	65
2	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	DMSO	none	DMSO	100	12	44	0
3	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	none	DCE	100	1	98	0
4	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	MsOH	DCE	100	5	45	0
5	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	TsOH	DCE	100	5	51	0
6	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	KOAc	DCE	100	5	0	0
7	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	K <sub>3</sub> PO <sub>4</sub> ·3H <sub>2</sub> O	DCE	100	5	0	18
8	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	K <sub>3</sub> PO <sub>4</sub>	DCE	100	5	35	18
9	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	K <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	DCE	100	5	8	29
10	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	Cs <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	DCE	100	5	0	36
11	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	CsF	DCE	100	5	0	0
12	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	TEA	DCE	100	5	0	0
13	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	DIPEA	DCE	100	5	0	0
14	PdCl <sub>2</sub> (10)/AgSbF <sub>6</sub> (20)	Ph <sub>2</sub> SO	DBU	DCE	100	5	0	0

<sup>a</sup> **1a** (0.23 mmol, 1.0 equiv), all of reagents were mixed and heated. <sup>b</sup> Determined by  $^1\text{H}$  NMR analysis of the crude product using CH<sub>2</sub>Br<sub>2</sub> as an internal standard.

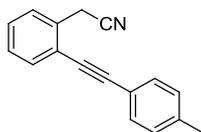
### General procedure for the synthesis of substrates



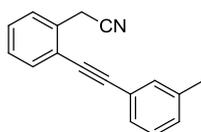
The aryl iodides **9** (2.06 mmol), Pd(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (2 mol%), CuI (2 mol%), PPh<sub>3</sub> (4 mol%) were placed in a nitrogen-filled Schlenk tube. After addition of *i*-Pr<sub>2</sub>NH (4.12 mmol) and toluene (10 mL), the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 5 minutes and terminal alkynes **10** (2.5 mmol) was added. The reaction mixture was allowed to stir at 50 °C for 12 h and the resulting solution was filtered and washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate (2 × 20 mL). The combined organic fractions were dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel using petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (30:1) as the eluent.



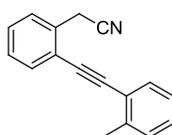
**2-(2-(phenylethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1a)**<sup>[1]</sup>: As a brown solid; yield: 95%; m.p. 58–60 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.66–7.45 (m, 4 H), 7.43–7.31 (m, 5 H), 3.98 (s, 2 H); MS (EI): m/z 217 [M]<sup>+</sup>.



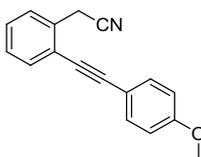
**2-(2-(p-tolyethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1b)**<sup>[2]</sup>: As a white crystalline solid; yield: 93%; m.p. 78–80 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.60–7.54 (m, 1 H), 7.53–7.48 (m, 1 H), 7.48–7.41 (m, 2 H), 7.41–7.29 (m, 2 H), 7.23–7.15 (m, 2 H), 3.98 (s, 2 H), 2.38 (s, 3 H); MS (EI): m/z 231 [M]<sup>+</sup>.



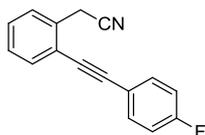
**2-(2-(m-tolylethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1c):** As a brown solid; yield: 96%; m.p. 34–36 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.57 (dd,  $J = 7.2, 1.8$  Hz, 1 H), 7.51 (d,  $J = 7.0$  Hz, 1 H), 7.42–7.30 (m, 4 H), 7.27 (t,  $J = 7.5$  Hz, 1 H), 7.19 (d,  $J = 7.5$  Hz, 2 H), 3.98 (s, 1H), 2.37 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  138.25, 132.36, 132.15, 131.67, 129.80, 128.97, 128.71, 128.42, 128.17, 128.13, 122.91, 122.29, 117.50, 95.92, 85.65, 22.80, 21.27; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{13}\text{N}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 231.1048; Found: 231.1041.



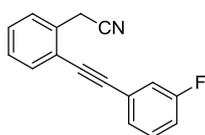
**2-(2-(o-tolylethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1d):** As a pale yellow solid; yield: 96%; m.p. 34–36 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.59 (d,  $J = 6.5$  Hz, 1 H), 7.53(d,  $J = 7.3$  Hz, 2 H), 7.44–7.31 (m, 2 H), 7.32–7.13 (m, 3 H), 3.99 (s, 2 H), 2.53 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  140.07, 132.47, 132.08, 131.44, 129.66, 128.99, 128.94, 128.20, 128.16, 125.79, 123.08, 122.33, 117.50, 94.62, 89.87, 22.88, 20.98; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{13}\text{N}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 231.1048; Found: 231.1040.



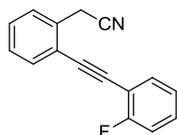
**2-(2-(4-methoxyphenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1e):** As a white crystalline solid; yield: 91%; m.p. 66–68 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.58–7.52 (m, 1 H), 7.53–7.44 (m, 3 H), 7.40–7.28 (m, 2 H), 6.90 (d,  $J = 8.9$  Hz, 2 H), 3.97 (s, 2 H), 3.84 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  194.45, 161.95, 142.30, 141.38, 135.42, 131.05, 129.59, 128.33, 124.17, 121.27, 120.76, 119.02, 114.71, 114.57, 55.47; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 247.0997; Found: 247.1002.



**2-(2-((4-fluorophenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1f):** As a white crystalline solid; yield: 83%; m.p. 75–77 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.59–7.46 (m, 4 H), 7.43–7.30 (m, 2 H), 7.14–7.02 (m, 2 H), 3.96 (s, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  162.84 (d,  $J = 251.4$  Hz, C-F), 133.57 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, CH-CH-CF), 132.39, 131.65, 129.13, 128.29, 128.25, 122.69, 118.62 (d,  $J = 3.5$  Hz, C-CH-CH-CF), 117.40, 115.87 (d,  $J = 22.1$  Hz, CH-CF), 94.61, 85.71, 22.85; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{10}\text{FN}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 235.0797; Found: 235.0790.

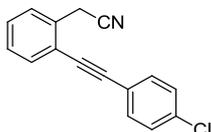


**2-(2-((3-fluorophenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1g):** As a brown powder; yield: 97%; m.p. 79–81 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.61–7.55 (m, 1 H), 7.54–7.48 (m, 1 H), 7.44–7.31 (m, 4 H), 7.28–7.21 (m, 1 H), 7.15–7.01 (m, 1 H), 3.96 (s, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  162.40 (d,  $J = 247.1$  Hz, C-F), 132.54, 131.81, 130.15 (d,  $J = 8.6$  Hz, CH-CH-CF), 129.42, 128.32, 128.28, 127.54 (d,  $J = 3.1$  Hz, CH-CH-CH-CF), 124.30 (d,  $J = 9.4$  Hz, C-CH-CF), 122.35, 118.38 (d,  $J = 23.0$  Hz, CH-CF), 117.35, 116.25 (d,  $J = 21.1$  Hz, CH-CF), 94.29 (d,  $J = 3.5$  Hz, C-C-CH-CF), 86.80, 22.84; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{10}\text{FN}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 235.0797; Found: 235.0796.

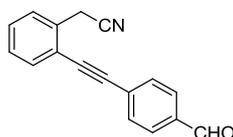


**2-(2-((2-fluorophenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1h):** As a brown powder; yield: 99%; m.p. 76–78 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.62–7.57 (m, 1 H), 7.57–7.50 (m, 2 H), 7.45–7.29 (m, 3 H), 7.20–7.07 (m, 2 H), 4.02 (s, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  162.69 (d,  $J = 251.8$  Hz, C-F), 133.20, 132.31, 131.97, 130.63 (d,  $J = 8.1$  Hz, CH-CH-CF), 129.40, 128.18, 128.16 (d,  $J = 6$  Hz, CH-CH-CF), 124.17 (d,  $J = 3.7$  Hz, CH-CH-CH-CF), 122.39, 117.49, 115.65 (d,  $J = 20.7$  Hz, CH-CF), 111.22 (d,  $J = 15.5$  Hz, C-CF), 91.12 (d,  $J = 3.4$  Hz, C-C-CF), 88.98, 22.69; HRMS (EI):

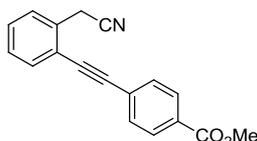
m/z Calcd. For C<sub>16</sub>H<sub>10</sub>FN [M]<sup>+</sup>: 235.0797; Found: 235.0793.



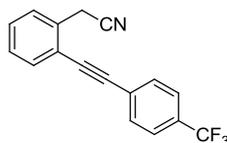
**2-(2-((4-chlorophenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1i)**<sup>[2]</sup>: As a white powder; yield: 84%; m.p. 94–96 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.60–7.53 (m, 1 H), 7.53–7.45 (m, 3 H), 7.44–7.30 (m, 4 H), 3.96 (s, 2 H); MS (EI): m/z 251 [M]<sup>+</sup>.



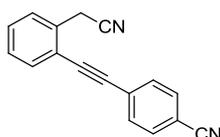
**2-(2-((4-formylphenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1j)**: As a pale yellow powder; yield: 97%; m.p. 106–108 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 10.04 (s, 1 H), 7.90 (dt, *J* = 8.2, 1.9 Hz, 2 H), 7.71 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 1.8 Hz, 2 H), 7.61 (dd, *J* = 7.3, 1.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.56–7.49 (m, 1 H), 7.44 (td, *J* = 7.5, 1.6 Hz, 1 H), 7.38 (td, *J* = 7.5, 1.6 Hz, 1 H), 3.98 (s, 2 H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 191.36, 135.84, 132.70, 132.15, 131.93, 129.78, 129.69, 128.67, 128.47, 128.38, 122.11, 117.23, 94.57, 89.73, 22.89; HRMS (EI): m/z Calcd. For C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>11</sub>NO [M]<sup>+</sup>: 245.0841; Found: 245.0835.



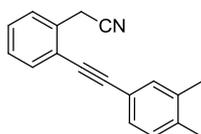
**methyl 4-((2-(cyanomethyl)phenyl)ethynyl)benzoate (1k)**: As a white powder; yield: 89%; m.p. 132–134 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.05 (dt, *J* = 8.3, 1.6 Hz, 2 H), 7.65–7.57 (m, 3 H), 7.55–7.49 (m, 1 H), 7.42 (td, *J* = 7.8, 1.6 Hz, 1 H), 7.37 (td, *J* = 7.6, 1.6 Hz, 1 H), 3.98 (s, 2 H), 3.94 (s, 3 H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 166.43, 132.61, 131.86, 131.53, 130.06, 129.65, 129.57, 128.36, 128.31, 127.11, 122.28, 117.29, 94.75, 88.74, 52.34, 22.86; HRMS (EI): m/z Calcd. For C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NO<sub>2</sub> [M]<sup>+</sup>: 275.0946; Found: 275.0949.



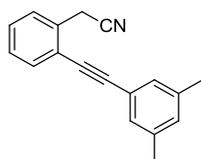
**2-(2-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)ethynyl)phenylacetonitrile (1l)**<sup>[2]</sup>: As a pale yellow solid; yield: 98%; m.p. 64–66 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.71–7.56 (m, 5 H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.46–7.32 (m, 2 H), 3.97 (s, 2 H); MS (EI): *m/z* 285 [M]<sup>+</sup>.



**4-(2-(cyanomethyl)phenyl)ethynylbenzonitrile (1m)**: As a white powder; yield: 93%; m.p. 108–110 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.71–7.62 (m, 4 H), 7.62–7.56 (m, 1 H), 7.55–7.48 (m, 1 H), 7.43 (td, *J* = 7.2, 1.6 Hz 1 H), 7.39 (td, *J* = 7.5, 1.6 Hz 1 H), 3.95 (s, 2 H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 132.74, 132.20, 132.11, 131.96, 129.95, 128.57, 128.43, 127.36, 121.86, 118.36, 117.15, 112.15, 93.75, 90.11, 22.91; HRMS (EI): *m/z* Calcd. For C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>10</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M]<sup>+</sup>: 242.0844; Found: 242.0843.

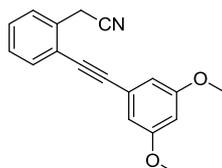


**2-(2-(3,4-dimethylphenyl)ethynyl)phenylacetonitrile (1n)**: As a brown solid; yield: 84%; m.p. 31–33 °C ; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.61–7.48 (m, 2 H), 7.42–7.32 (m, 3 H), 7.29 (dd, *J* = 7.3, 1.7 Hz, 1 H), 7.13 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1 H), 3.98 (s, 2 H), 2.29 (s, 3 H), 2.28 (s, 3 H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 137.98, 136.91, 132.59, 132.26, 131.58, 129.82, 129.08, 128.79, 128.14, 128.07, 123.10, 119.70, 117.57, 96.13, 85.18, 22.80, 19.88, 19.64. HRMS (EI): *m/z* Calcd. For C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N [M]<sup>+</sup>: 245.1204; Found: 245.1201.

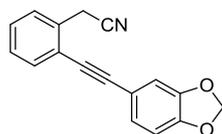


**2-(2-(3,5-dimethylphenyl)ethynyl)phenylacetonitrile (1o)**: As a pale brown solid; yield:

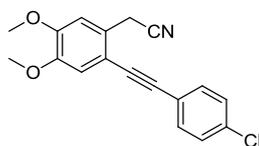
81%; m.p. 32–33 °C ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.58–7.46 (m, 2 H), 7.42–7.29 (m, 2 H), 7.18 (t,  $J = 0.7$  Hz, 2 H), 7.01 (t,  $J = 0.7$  Hz, 1 H), 3.98 (s, 2 H), 2.33 (s, 6 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  138.13, 132.32, 131.65, 130.84, 129.28, 128.90, 128.16, 128.09, 122.99, 122.09, 117.55, 96.13, 85.32, 22.79, 21.16; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{15}\text{N}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 245.1204; Found: 245.1197.



**2-(2-((3,5-dimethoxyphenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1p):** As a pale yellow solid; yield: 63%; m.p. 93–95 °C ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.57 (dd,  $J = 7.0, 1.9$  Hz, 1 H), 7.51 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1 H), 7.42–7.29 (m, 2 H), 6.71 (d,  $J = 2.2$  Hz, 2 H), 6.50 (t,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, 1 H), 3.97 (s, 2 H), 3.81 (s, 6 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  160.65, 132.44, 131.79, 129.15, 128.19, 123.76, 122.65, 117.51, 110.18, 109.39, 102.20, 95.66, 85.56, 55.50, 22.82; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}_2$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 277.1103; Found: 277.1104.

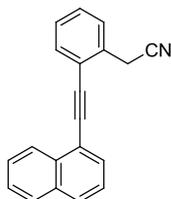


**2-(2-(benzo[d][1,3]dioxol-5-ylethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1q):** As a pale yellow solid; yield: 84%; m.p. 114–115 °C ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.57–7.44 (m, 2 H), 7.40–7.29 (m, 2 H), 7.09 (dd,  $J = 8.0, 1.6$  Hz, 1 H), 6.99 (d,  $J = 1.6$  Hz, 1 H), 6.81 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1 H), 6.00 (s, 2 H), 3.95 (s, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  148.42, 147.60, 132.25, 131.54, 128.84, 128.18, 126.45, 122.95, 117.50, 115.69, 111.46, 108.65, 101.49, 95.72, 84.51, 22.83; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}_2$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 261.0790; Found: 261.0782.



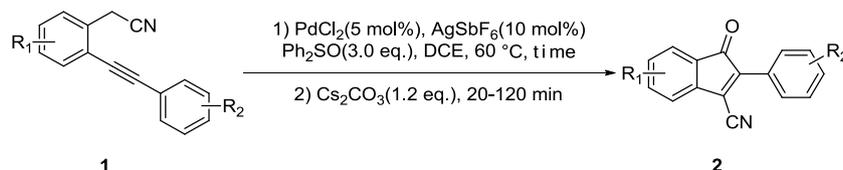
**2-(2-((4-chlorophenyl)ethynyl)-4,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetonitrile (1r):** As a white powder;

yield: 83%; m.p. 118–121 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.47 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, 2 H), 7.34 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, 2 H), 7.03 (s, 1 H), 6.95 (s, 1 H), 3.95 (s, 3 H), 3.92 (s, 2 H), 3.91 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  150.01, 148.57, 134.66, 132.66, 128.85, 124.84, 121.22, 117.69, 114.53, 114.43, 111.13, 92.91, 87.17, 56.16, 56.14, 22.41; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{14}\text{ClNO}_2$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 311.0713; Found: 311.0713.

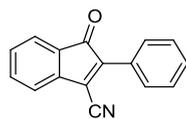


**2-(2-(naphthalen-1-ylethynyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (1s):** As a yellow powder; yield: 88%; m.p. 72–74 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.38 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1 H), 7.89 (d,  $J = 8.2$  Hz, 2 H), 7.80 (dd,  $J = 7.1, 1.1$  Hz, 1 H), 7.74–7.68 (m, 1 H), 7.66–7.54 (m, 3 H), 7.53–7.44 (m, 1 H), 7.44–7.36 (m, 2 H), 4.09 (s, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  133.21, 133.03, 132.64, 131.62, 130.87, 129.44, 129.20, 128.49, 128.29, 128.26, 127.13, 126.63, 125.92, 125.32, 122.95, 120.13, 117.54, 93.79, 90.75, 23.00; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{13}\text{N}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 267.1048; Found: 267.1048.

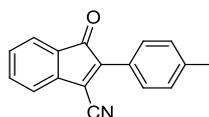
### General procedure for the synthesis of indenones



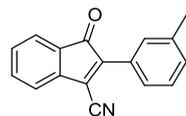
After stirring for 5 min at room temperature, the mixture of **1** (0.23 mmol),  $\text{PdCl}_2$  (5 mol%),  $\text{AgSbF}_6$  (10 mol%) and  $\text{Ph}_2\text{SO}$  (0.69 mmol) in dry DCE (1 mL) was heated at 60 °C under air for the specified time, then  $\text{Cs}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.28 mmol, 1.2 equiv) was added, stirred for additional 20–120 min. After cooling, the reaction solution was washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate ( $2 \times 15$  mL). The combined organic fractions were dried over anhydrous  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel, with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (80:1) as the eluent to give the pure product.



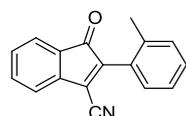
**1-oxo-2-phenyl-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2a):** As a red powder: yield: 97%; m.p. 149–151 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.02–7.88 (m, 2 H), 7.65–7.54 (m, 2 H), 7.55–7.46 (m, 3 H), 7.42–7.32 (m, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.79, 143.04, 140.86, 135.42, 131.07, 130.18, 129.19, 128.98, 128.44, 128.34, 124.32, 122.33, 121.18, 114.11; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_9\text{NO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 231.0684; Found: 231.0684.



**1-oxo-2-(p-tolyl)-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2b):** As a red powder; yield: 81%; m.p. 156–158 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.89 (d,  $J = 8.3$  Hz, 2 H), 7.60–7.55 (m, 1 H), 7.55–7.49 (m, 1 H), 7.41–7.28 (m, 4 H), 2.43 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  194.09, 143.01, 141.82, 141.10, 135.38, 129.91, 129.75, 129.13, 128.38, 125.73, 124.23, 121.06, 120.99, 114.35, 21.68; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 245.0841; Found: 245.0838.

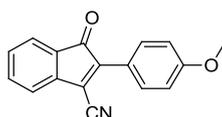


**1-oxo-2-(m-tolyl)-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2c):** As a dark red powder; yield: 85%; m.p. 128–130 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.74 (brs, 2 H), 7.56 (dd,  $J = 16.2, 7.6$  Hz, 2 H), 7.45–7.28 (m, 4 H), 2.44 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.86, 143.22, 140.94, 138.72, 135.39, 131.96, 130.09, 129.66, 128.89, 128.39, 128.36, 126.38, 124.26, 122.10, 121.11, 114.17, 21.51; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 245.0841; Found: 245.0846.

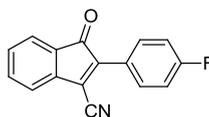


**1-oxo-2-(o-tolyl)-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2d):** As a red crystalline solid; yield: 87%; m.p.

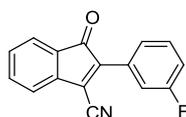
98–100 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.64–7.48 (m, 2 H), 7.45–7.27 (m, 6 H), 2.35 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.24, 147.57, 140.62, 137.34, 135.28, 131.02, 130.43, 130.34, 129.82, 128.18, 127.93, 126.55, 126.01, 124.49, 121.28, 113.29, 20.79; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 245.0841; Found: 245.0841.



**2-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2e):** As a reddish brown powder; yield: 95%; m.p. 142–144 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.03 (dt,  $J = 8.9, 2.0$  Hz, 2 H), 7.61–7.45 (m, 2 H), 7.38–7.27 (m, 2 H), 7.02 (dt,  $J = 8.9, 2.0$  Hz, 2 H), 3.88 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  194.45, 161.95, 142.30, 141.38, 135.42, 131.05, 129.59, 128.33, 124.17, 121.27, 120.76, 119.02, 114.71, 114.57, 55.47; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}_2$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 261.0790; Found: 261.0787.

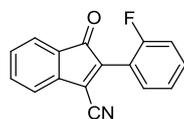


**2-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2f):** As a red powder; yield: 80%; m.p. 136–138 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.05–7.96 (m, 2 H), 7.61–7.51 (m, 2 H), 7.41–7.30 (m, 2 H), 7.25–7.15 (m, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.73, 164.25 (d,  $J = 254.2$  Hz, C-F), 141.77, 140.77, 135.53, 131.46 (d,  $J = 8.6$  Hz, CH-CH-CF), 130.23, 128.19, 124.71 (d,  $J = 3.4$  Hz, C-CH-CH-CF), 124.41, 121.84 (d,  $J = 2.4$  Hz, C-C-CH-CH-CF), 121.21, 116.34 (d,  $J = 21.9$  Hz, CH-CF), 114.08; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_8\text{FNO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 249.0590; Found: 249.0598.

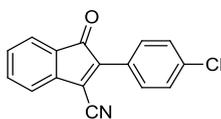


**2-(3-fluorophenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2g):** As a red powder; yield: 75%; m.p.

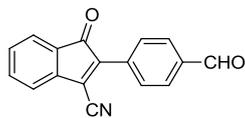
155–157 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.77 (ddd,  $J = 7.9, 1.7, 0.8$  Hz, 1 H), 7.69 (dt,  $J = 10.0, 2.0$  Hz, 1 H), 7.63–7.44 (m, 3 H), 7.43–7.36 (m, 2 H), 7.27–7.13 (m, 1 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.26 (s), 162.70 (d,  $J = 247.2$  Hz, C-F), 141.47 (d,  $J = 2.8$  Hz, C-C-CH-CF), 140.50 (s), 135.55 (s), 130.63 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, CH-CH-CF), 130.57 (s), 130.24 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, C-CH-CF), 128.24 (s), 124.86 (d,  $J = 3.2$  Hz, CH-CH-CH-CF), 124.50 (s), 123.44 (s), 121.47 (s), 118.08 (d,  $J = 21.3$  Hz, CH-CF), 116.14 (d,  $J = 23.6$  Hz, CH-CF), 113.76 (s); HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_8\text{FNO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 249.0590; Found: 249.0590.



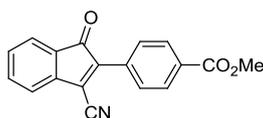
**2-(2-fluorophenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2h):** As a red powder; yield: 68%; m.p. 154–156 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.65–7.45 (m, 4 H), 7.44–7.35 (m, 2 H), 7.33–7.26 (m, 1 H), 7.25–7.19 (m, 1 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  192.63, 160.53 (d,  $J = 253.8$  Hz, C-F), 140.72, 139.38 (d,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, C-C-C-CF), 135.39, 132.54 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, CH-CH-CF), 131.40 (d,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, CH-C-CF), 130.54, 128.03, 126.80 (d,  $J = 2$  Hz, C-C-CF), 124.50, 124.46 (d,  $J = 3.5$  Hz, CH-CH-CH-CF), 121.51, 116.52 (d,  $J = 21.6$  Hz, CH-CF), 116.42 (d,  $J = 14.8$  Hz, C-CF), 112.98; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_8\text{FNO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 249.0590; Found: 249.0589.



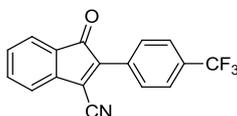
**2-(4-chlorophenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2i):** As an orange red powder; yield: 82%; m.p. 150–152 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.93 (dt,  $J = 8.9, 2.1$  Hz, 2 H), 7.57 (ddd,  $J = 15.2, 7.5, 1.2$  Hz, 2 H), 7.38 (dt,  $J = 8.9, 2.1$  Hz, 2 H), 7.43–7.33 (m, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.63, 141.76, 140.79, 137.55, 135.67, 130.54, 130.51, 129.48, 128.36, 126.99, 124.57, 122.60, 121.45, 114.06; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_8\text{ClNO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 265.0294; Found: 265.0289.



**2-(4-formylphenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2j):** As a scarlet powder; yield: 67%; m.p. 168–170 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  10.09 (s, 1 H), 8.12 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz 2 H), 8.01 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz 2 H), 7.66–7.56 (m, 2 H), 7.43 (t,  $J = 6.4$  Hz, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.01, 191.45, 141.51, 140.38, 137.24, 135.63, 133.86, 130.92, 129.96, 129.74, 128.24, 124.79, 124.62, 121.72, 113.60; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_9\text{NO}_2$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 259.0633; Found: 259.0633.

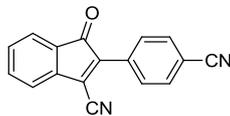


**methyl 4-(3-cyano-1-oxo-1H-inden-2-yl)benzoate (2k):** As an orange red powder; yield: 75%; m.p. 156–158 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.16 (dt,  $J = 8.6, 2.0$  Hz, 2 H), 8.02 (dt,  $J = 8.5, 1.9$  Hz, 2 H), 7.59 (ddd,  $J = 16.4, 7.7, 1.2$  Hz, 2 H), 7.46–7.36 (m, 2 H), 3.96 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.21, 166.27, 141.81, 140.50, 135.55, 132.48, 131.89, 130.71, 130.01, 129.11, 128.28, 124.52, 124.17, 121.57, 113.71, 52.45; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}_3$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 289.0739; Found: 289.0747.

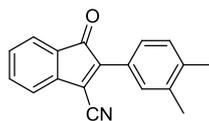


**1-oxo-2-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2l):** As an orange yellow crystalline solid; yield: 54%; m.p. 145–148 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.05 (d,  $J = 8.1$  Hz, 2 H), 7.77 (d,  $J = 8.3$  Hz, 2 H), 7.65–7.54 (m, 2 H), 7.42 (t,  $J = 7.0$  Hz, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.06, 141.44, 140.35, 135.61, 132.37 (q,  $J = 32.8$  Hz, C- $\text{CF}_3$ ), 131.68, 130.83, 129.47, 128.20, 125.88 (q,  $J = 3.8$  Hz, CH-C- $\text{CF}_3$ ), 124.60, 124.51, 123.66 (q,  $J = 272.7$  Hz, C- $\text{F}_3$ ), 121.67,

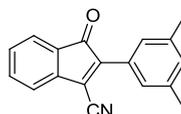
113.57; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $C_{17}H_8F_3NO$   $[M]^+$ : 299.0558; Found: 299.0569.



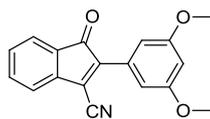
**2-(4-cyanophenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2m):** As an orange red powder; yield: 49%; m.p. 175–178 °C;  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  8.07 (dt,  $J = 8.4, 1.9$  Hz, 2 H), 7.80 (dt,  $J = 8.4, 1.9$  Hz, 2 H), 7.68–7.53 (m, 2 H), 7.49–7.37 (m, 2 H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (126 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  192.75, 140.70, 140.16, 135.71, 132.57, 132.55, 131.12, 129.60, 128.15, 125.16, 124.73, 121.87, 118.13, 114.19, 113.40; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $C_{17}H_8N_2O$   $[M]^+$ : 256.0637; Found: 256.0639.



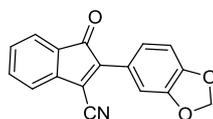
**2-(3,4-dimethylphenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2n):** As a red powder; yield: 87%; m.p. 143–145 °C ;  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  7.77–7.68 (m, 2 H), 7.61–7.49 (m, 2 H), 7.39–7.27 (m, 3 H), 2.34 (s, 3 H), 2.33 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (126 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  194.19, 194.19, 143.15, 141.17, 140.67, 137.41, 135.37, 130.30, 130.10, 129.84, 129.20, 128.41, 126.83, 126.13, 124.19, 120.94, 114.41, 20.03, 19.91; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $C_{18}H_{13}NO$   $[M]^+$ : 259.0997; Found: 259.1002.



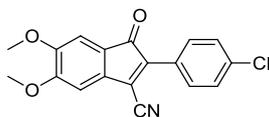
**2-(3,5-dimethylphenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2o):** As a red powder; yield: 92%; m.p. 159–160 °C ;  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  7.62–7.47 (m, 4 H), 7.40–7.32 (m, 2 H), 7.14 (s, 1 H), 2.39 (s, 6 H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (126 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  193.97, 143.48, 141.02, 138.61, 135.37, 132.97, 130.00, 128.39, 128.32, 126.88, 124.23, 121.92, 121.05, 114.21, 21.38; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $C_{18}H_{13}NO$   $[M]^+$ : 259.0997; Found: 259.0995.



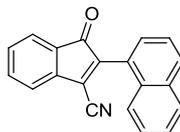
**2-(3,5-dimethoxyphenyl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2p):** As a dark red powder; yield: 60%; m.p. 178–181 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.62–7.49 (m, 2 H), 7.41–7.33 (m, 2 H), 7.14 (d,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, 2 H), 6.59 (t,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, 1 H), 3.85 (s, 6 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  194.98, 162.32, 144.20, 142.14, 136.82, 131.65, 131.34, 129.82, 125.71, 124.05, 122.64, 115.55, 108.31, 105.43, 56.97; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}_3$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 291.0895; Found: 291.0892.



**2-(benzo[*d*][1,3]dioxol-5-yl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2q):** As a reddish brown powder; yield: 54%; m.p. 201–203 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.63 (dd,  $J = 8.3, 1.8$  Hz, 1 H), 7.58–7.53 (m, 1 H), 7.53–7.48 (m, 2 H), 7.37–7.28 (m, 2 H), 6.94 (d,  $J = 8.3$  Hz, 1 H), 6.06 (s, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  195.45, 151.68, 149.66, 143.64, 142.57, 136.90, 131.19, 129.68, 126.37, 125.69, 124.01, 122.32, 121.11, 115.93, 110.42, 110.30, 103.21; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_9\text{NO}_3$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 275.0582; Found: 275.0589.

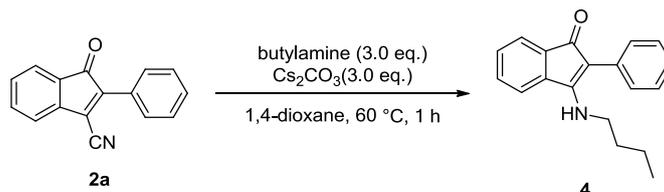


**2-(4-chlorophenyl)-5,6-dimethoxy-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2r):** As a celadon powder; yield: 53%; m.p. 208–211 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.90 (dt,  $J = 6.8, 2.0$  Hz, 2 H), 7.47 (dt,  $J = 6.8, 2.0$  Hz, 2 H), 7.14 (s, 1 H), 6.87 (s, 1 H), 4.02 (s, 3 H), 3.93 (s, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  192.82, 154.77, 150.18, 141.22, 137.06, 135.43, 130.19, 129.28, 127.16, 120.87, 120.32, 114.25, 108.22, 105.04, 56.73, 56.52; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{12}\text{ClNO}_3$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 325.0506; Found: 325.0509.

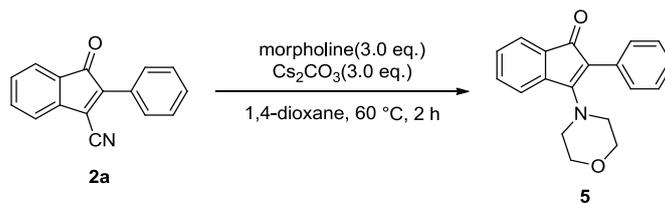


**2-(naphthalen-1-yl)-1-oxo-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (2s):** As a red powder; yield: 57%; m.p. 141–143 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.06–7.88 (m, 2 H), 7.78–7.72 (m, 1 H), 7.70–7.49 (m, 6 H), 7.44 (m, 2 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  194.92, 147.58, 142.17, 136.85, 135.20, 132.65, 132.48, 131.89, 130.18, 130.10, 129.69, 128.60, 128.18, 128.01, 127.47, 127.08, 126.60, 126.07, 122.82, 114.61; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{11}\text{NO}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 281.0841; Found: 281.0831.

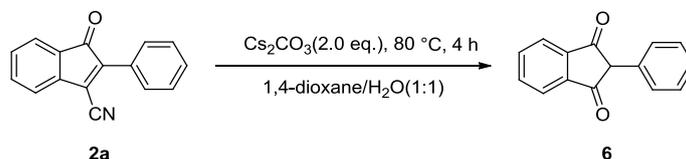
### Transformations of 3-cyanoindenes



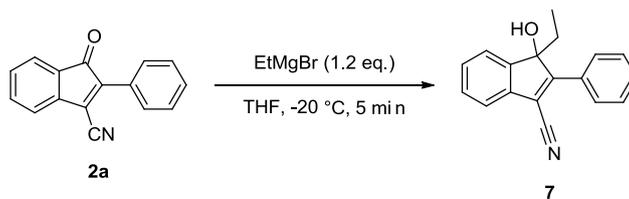
**3-(butylamino)-2-phenyl-1H-inden-1-one (4)**<sup>[31]</sup>: The mixture of **2a** (0.13 mmol), butylamine (0.39 mmol) and  $\text{Cs}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.39 mmol) in dry dioxane (2 mL) was heated at 60 °C for 1 h. After cooling, the reaction solution was washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate (2  $\times$  15 mL). The combined organic fractions were dried over anhydrous  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel, with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (4:1) as the eluent to give **4** as an orange red powder in 84% yield; m.p. 101–102 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-}d_6$ )  $\delta$  8.07 (t,  $J = 6.0$  Hz, 1 H), 7.70 (d,  $J = 7.0$  Hz, 1 H), 7.48–7.27 (m, 5 H), 7.23 (m, 3 H), 3.10 (brs, 2 H), 1.29 (t,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 2 H), 0.94 (q,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 2 H), 0.62 (t,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (126 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-}d_6$ )  $\delta$  191.10, 159.60, 139.74, 135.18, 134.97, 131.79, 131.62, 130.62, 128.13, 126.75, 120.15, 119.02, 105.19, 44.69, 31.95, 19.88, 14.04; HRMS (ESI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{20}\text{NO}$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 278.1545; Found: 278.1548.



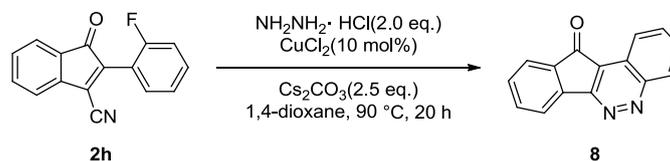
**3-morpholino-2-phenyl-1H-inden-1-one (5)**: The mixture of **2a** (0.13 mmol), morpholine (0.39 mmol) and Cs<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.39 mmol) in dry dioxane (2 mL) was heated at 60 °C for 1 h. After cooling, the reaction solution was washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate (2 × 15 mL). The combined organic fractions were dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel, with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (4:1) as the eluent to give **5** as red oil in 44% yield; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.59–7.49 (m, 1 H), 7.44–7.28 (m, 8 H), 3.77 (t, *J* = 4.6 Hz, 4 H), 3.47 (t, *J* = 4.7 Hz, 4 H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 192.73, 162.80, 139.82, 134.72, 133.05, 131.62, 130.32, 129.70, 128.02, 126.90, 121.38, 120.97, 112.98, 66.74, 50.76; HRMS (EI): *m/z* Calcd. For C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NO<sub>2</sub> [M]<sup>+</sup>: 291.1259; Found: 291.1258.



**2-phenyl-1H-indene-1,3(2H)-dione (6)**<sup>[4]</sup>: The mixture of **2a** (0.13 mmol) and Cs<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.26 mmol) in 2 mL of dioxane/H<sub>2</sub>O (1:1) was heated at 80 °C for 4 h. After cooling, the reaction solution was acidified by HCl aq. (1 N) to pH 4.0, then washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate (2 × 15 mL). The combined organic fractions were dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel, with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (4:1) as the eluent to give **6** as white shiny flakes in 38% yield; m.p. 135–137 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.08 (dd, *J* = 5.7, 3.1 Hz, 2 H), 7.91 (dd, *J* = 5.6, 3.1 Hz, 2 H), 7.39–7.28 (m, 3 H), 7.23–7.11 (m, 2 H), 4.27 (s, 1 H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 198.33, 142.67, 136.04, 133.15, 129.03, 128.78, 127.89, 123.80, 59.84; HRMS (EI): *m/z* Calcd. For C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>10</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [M]<sup>+</sup>: 222.0681; Found: 222.0682.

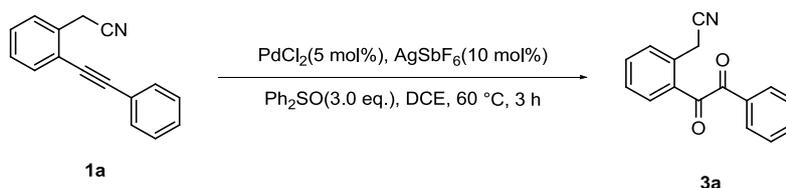


**1-ethyl-1-hydroxy-2-phenyl-1H-indene-3-carbonitrile (7):** To a solution of **2a** (0.13 mmol) in THF (2 mL), EtMgBr (0.16 mmol) was added at  $-20\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and was stirred for 5 min. Then saturated aq.  $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$  (2 mL) was added dropwise, the resulting solution washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate ( $2 \times 15\text{ mL}$ ). The combined organic fractions was dried over anhydrous  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel, with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (8:1) as the eluent to give **7** as colorless oil in 71% yield;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.19–8.02 (m, 2 H), 7.55–7.40 (m, 5 H), 7.42–7.31 (m, 2 H), 2.30 (s, 1 H), 2.26–2.09 (m, 1 H), 2.08–1.89 (m, 1 H), 0.44 (t,  $J = 7.5\text{ Hz}$ , 3 H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  161.80, 146.13, 138.21, 132.15, 130.80, 129.87, 129.14, 128.36, 128.28, 122.70, 120.81, 115.55, 110.50, 87.77, 31.12, 7.83; HRMS (ESI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{15}\text{NONa}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 284.1051; Found: 284.1046.



**11H-indeno[1,2-c]cinnolin-11-one (8):** The mixture of **2h** (0.13 mmol), hydrazine monohydrochloride (0.26 mmol),  $\text{CuCl}_2$  (10 mol%) and  $\text{Cs}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.33 mmol) in dry dioxane (2 mL) was heated at  $90\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  under air for 20 h. After cooling, the reaction solution was washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate ( $2 \times 15\text{ mL}$ ). The combined organic fractions were dried over anhydrous  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel, with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (4:1) as the eluent to give **8** as an orange red powder in 93% yield; m.p.  $> 300\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.72–8.59 (m, 1 H), 8.57–8.43 (m, 1 H), 8.18 (d,  $J = 7.4\text{ Hz}$ , 1 H), 7.87–7.73 (m, 3 H), 7.67 (t,  $J = 7.4\text{ Hz}$ , 1 H), 7.47 (t,  $J = 7.5\text{ Hz}$ , 1 H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  193.37, 157.84, 152.98, 142.77, 135.88, 134.29, 133.79, 131.22, 130.84, 130.56, 124.91, 123.30, 121.92, 121.35, 119.90; HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  Calcd. For  $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_8\text{N}_2\text{O}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 232.0637; Found: 232.0638.

### Isolation of 1,2-dicarbonyl compound **3a**



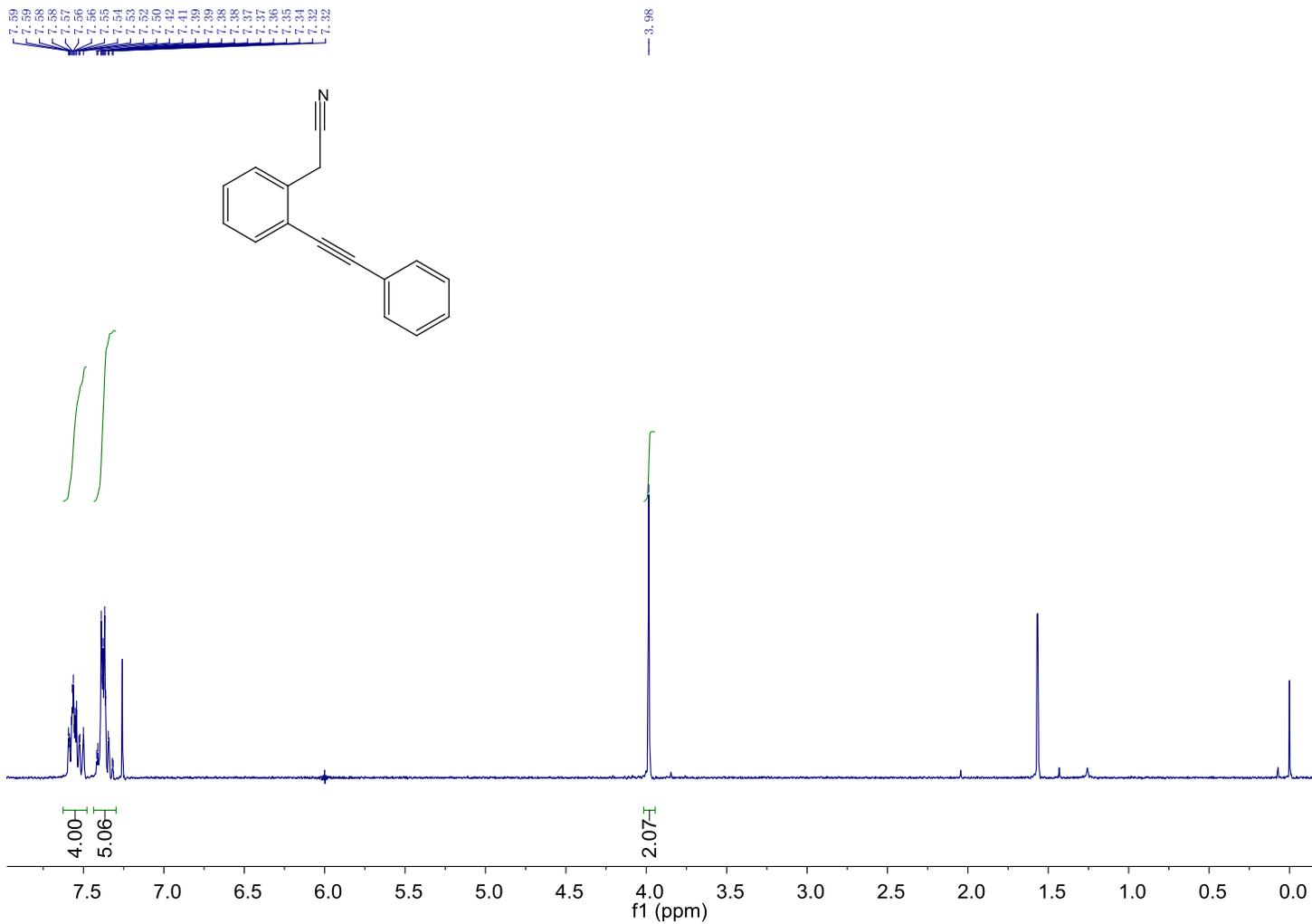
**2-(2-(2-oxo-2-phenylacetyl)phenyl)acetonitrile (3a):** After stirring for 5 min at room temperature, the mixture of **1a** (0.23 mmol), PdCl<sub>2</sub> (5 mol%), AgSbF<sub>6</sub> (10 mol%) and Ph<sub>2</sub>SO (0.69 mmol) in dry DCE (1 mL) was heated at 60 °C under air for 3 h. After cooling, the reaction solution was washed with saturated brine and extracted with ethyl acetate (2 × 15 mL). The combined organic fractions was dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated under vacuum to yield the crude product. The crude product was chromatographed on silica gel, with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (10:1 to 6:1) as the eluent to give the 1,2-dicarbonyl compound **3a** as a brown oil in 82% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.97 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2 H), 7.77-7.64 (m, 3 H), 7.54 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.46 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2 H), 4.36 (s, 2 H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 196.22, 193.83, 135.20, 134.90, 134.27, 132.75, 132.62, 131.04, 130.27, 130.00, 129.20, 128.63, 117.39, 23.25; HRMS (EI): *m/z* Calcd. For C<sub>16</sub>H<sub>11</sub>NO<sub>2</sub> [M]<sup>+</sup>: 249.0790; Found: 249.0792.

### Reference

- (1) Shen, H.; Xie, Z. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2010**, *132*, 11473.
- (2) Severin, R.; Reimer, J.; Doye, S. *J. Org. Chem.* **2010**, *75*, 3518.
- (3) Ismail, I. M.; El-Sharief, A. M. S.; Ammar, Y. A.; Amer, R. M. *Egypt. J. Chem.* **1985**, *27*, 229.
- (4) Lu, C.-D.; Chen, Z.-Y.; Liu, H.; Hu, W.-H.; Mi, A.-Q.; Doyle, M. P. *J. Org. Chem.* **2004**, *69*, 4856.

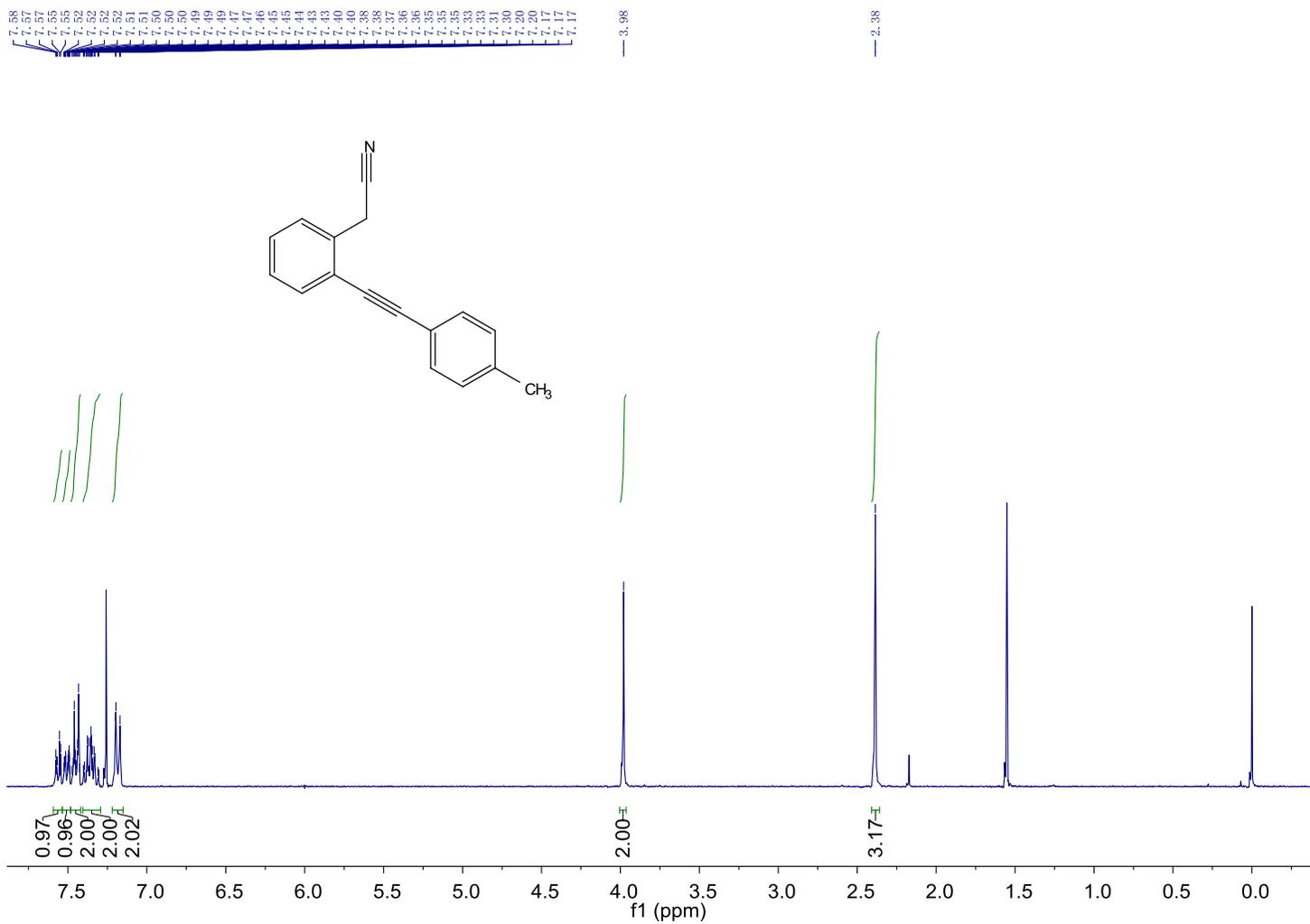
# $^1\text{H}$ NMR and $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR spectra

**1a**

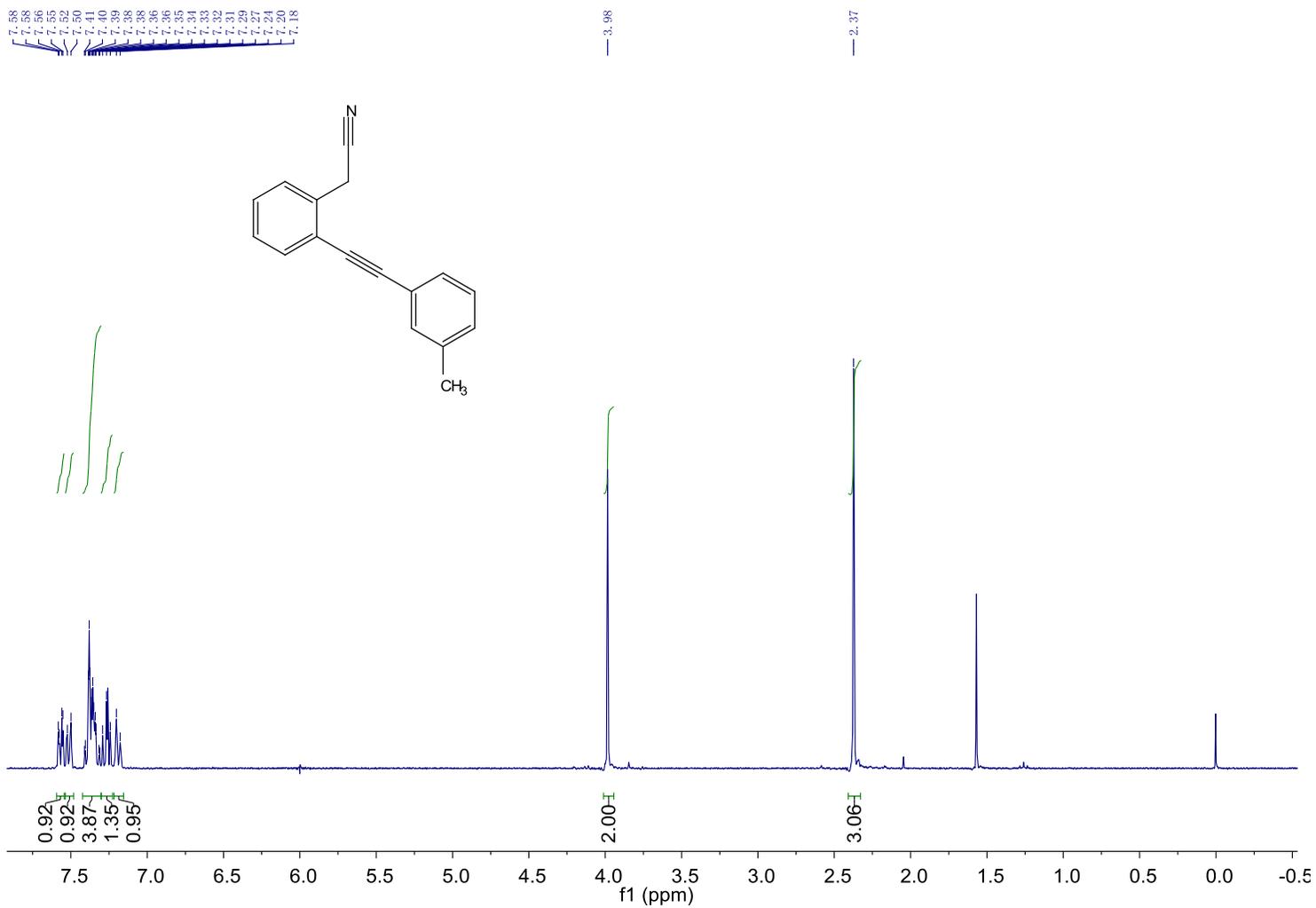


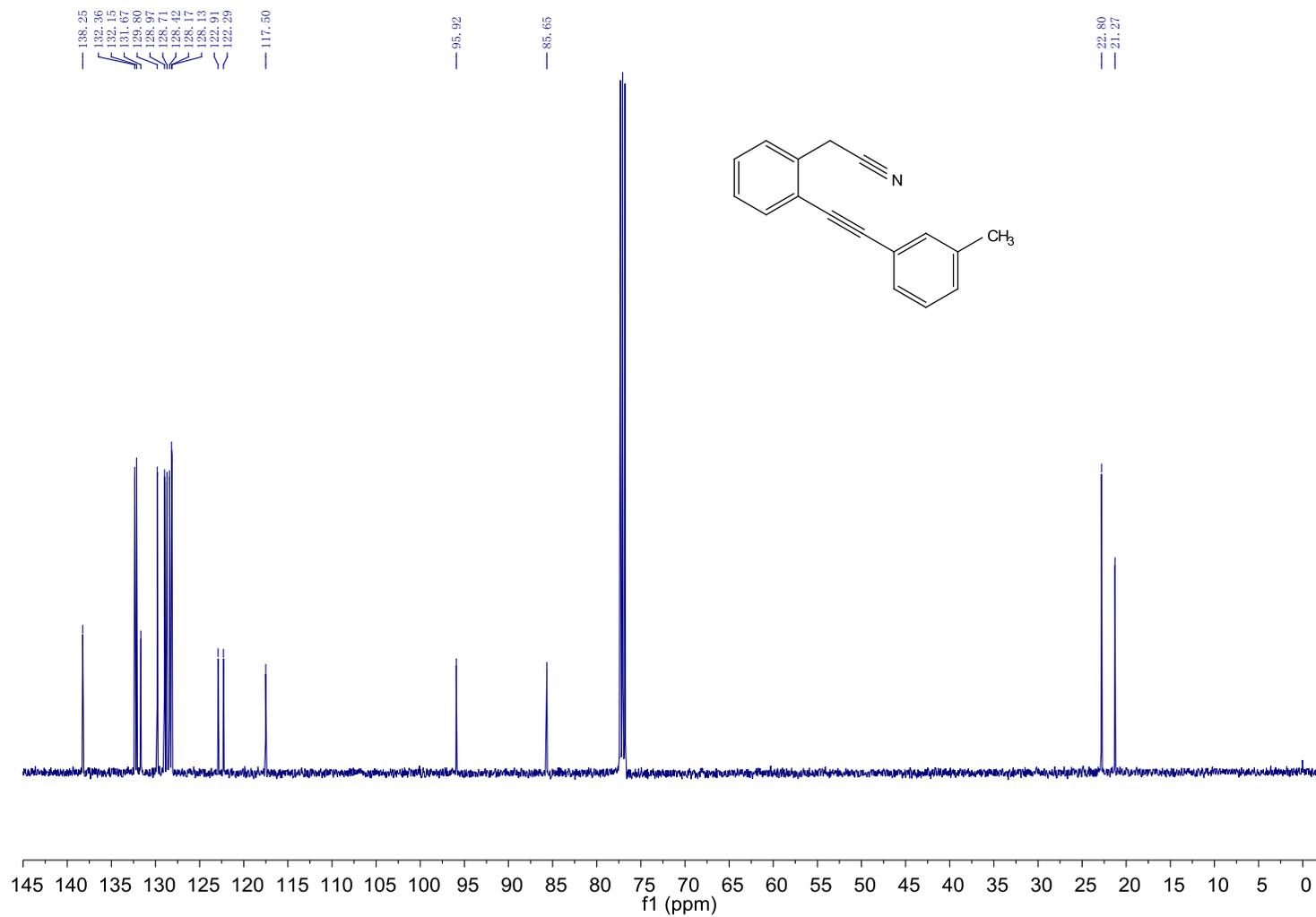
S20

1b

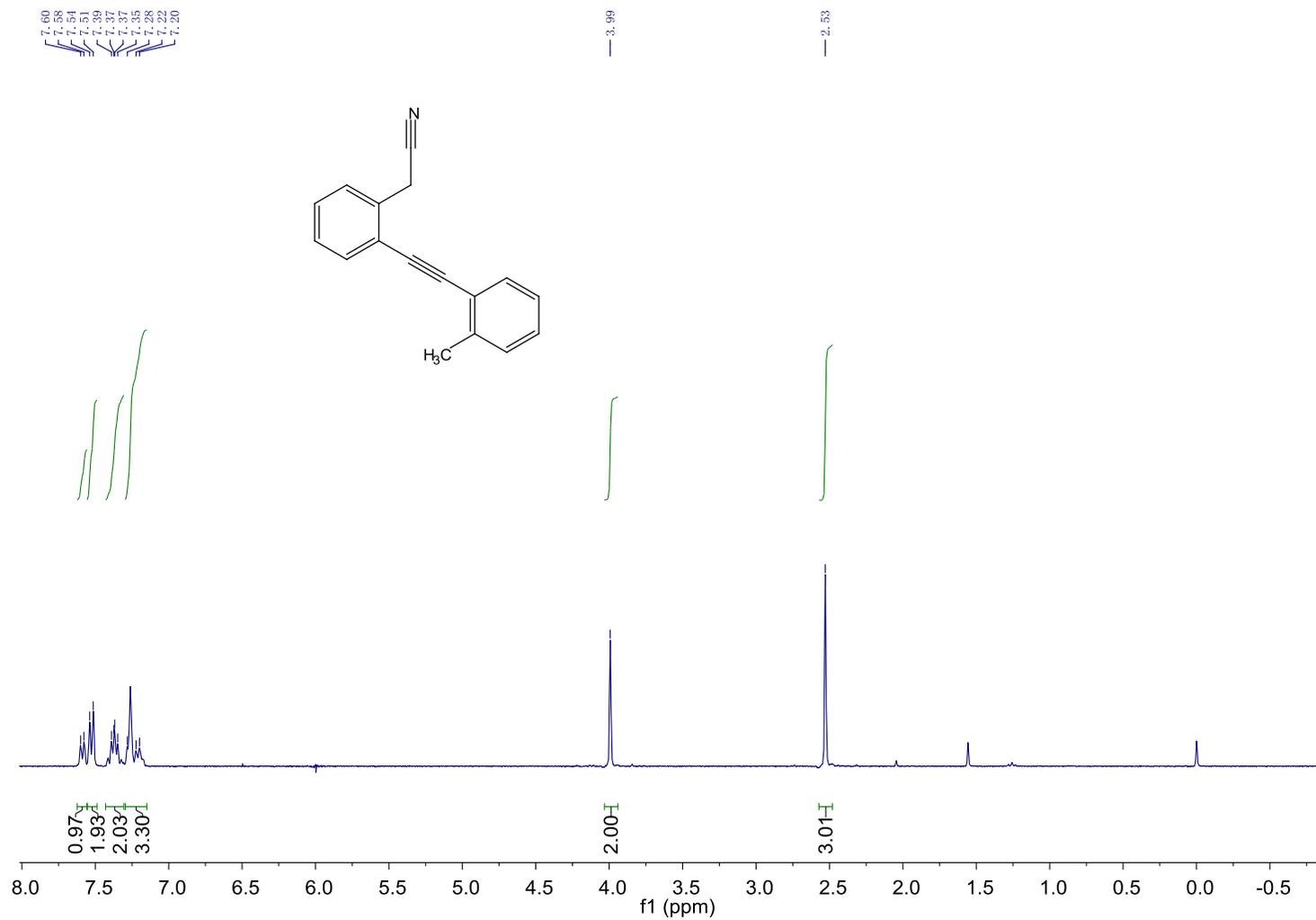


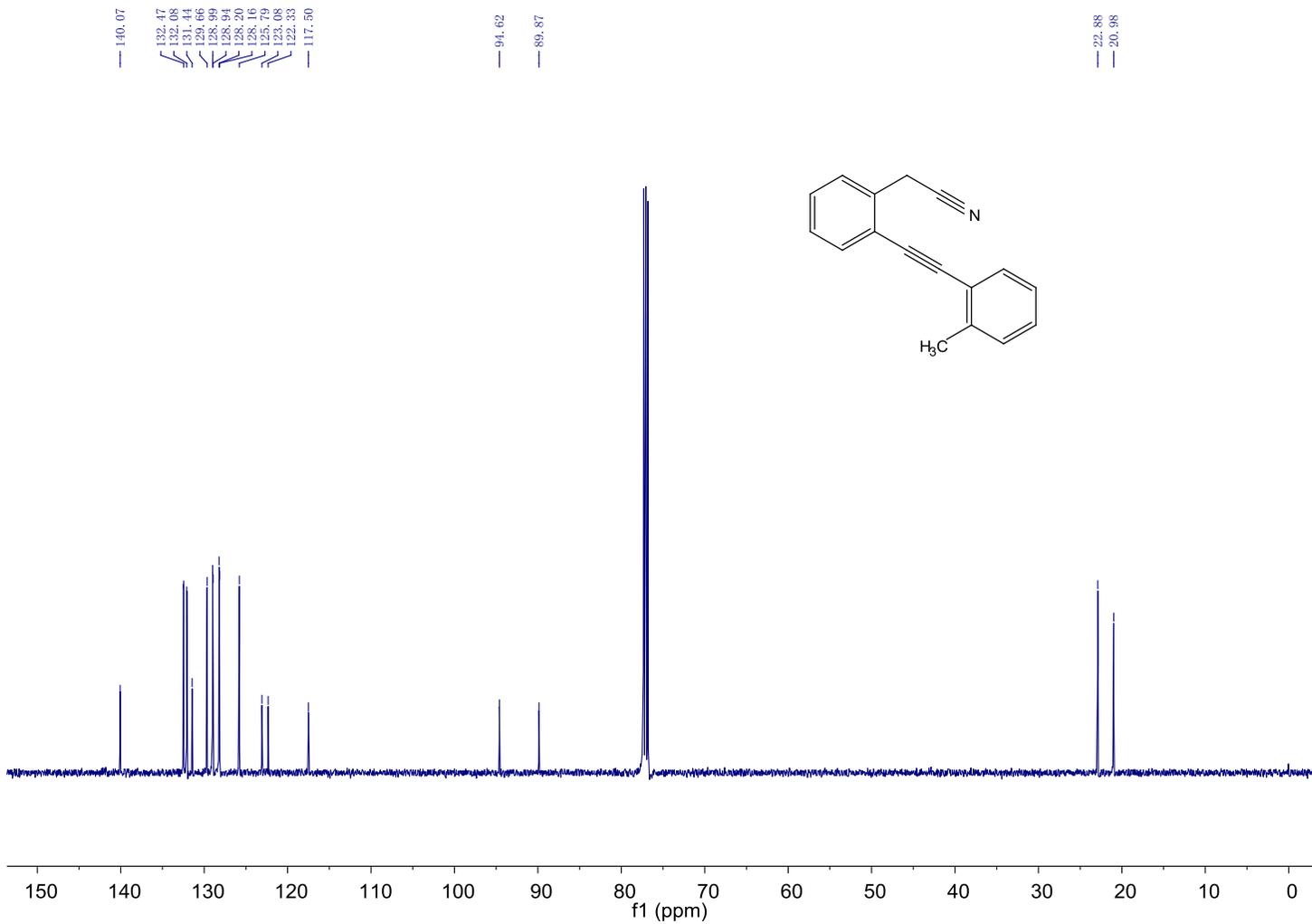
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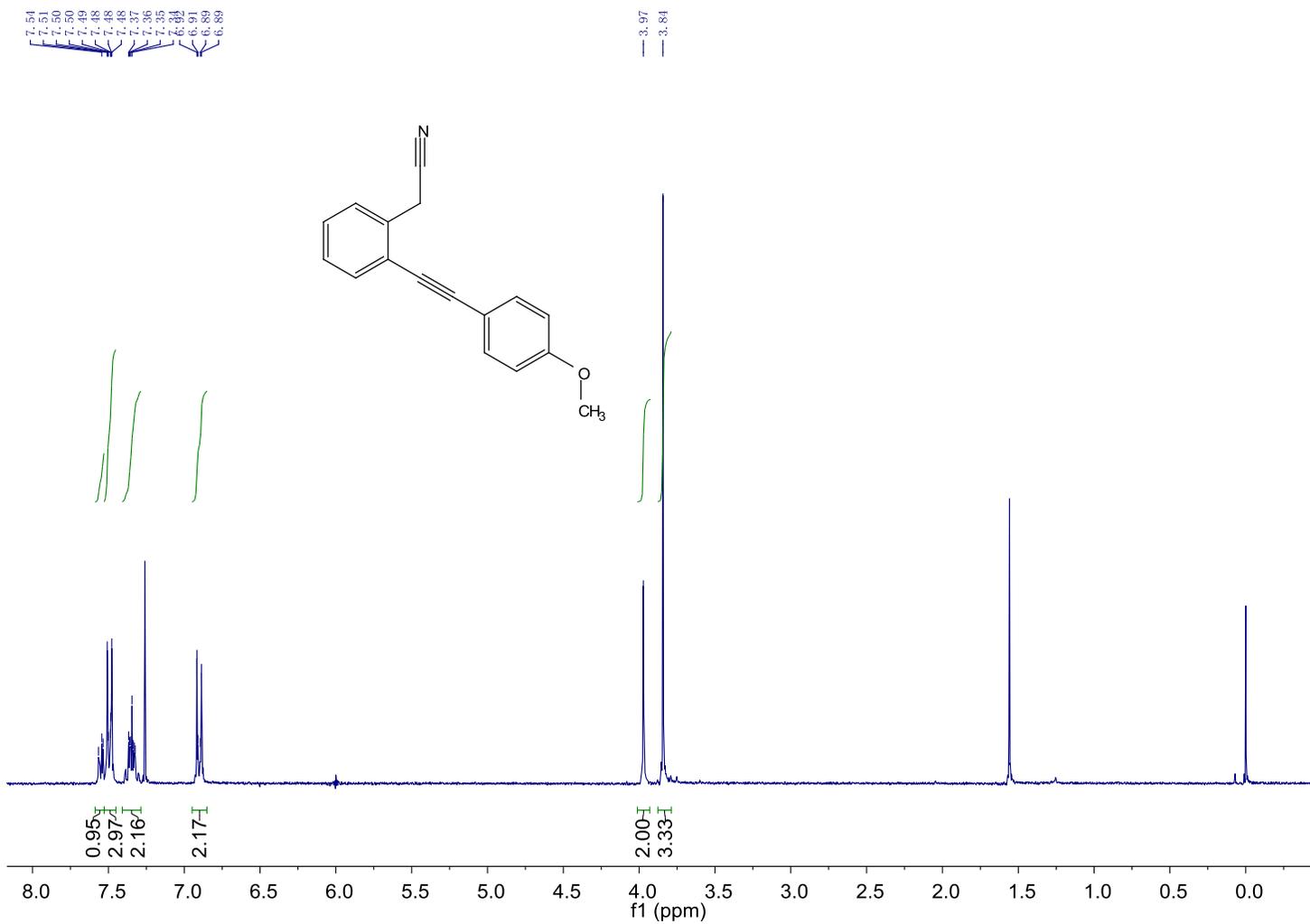


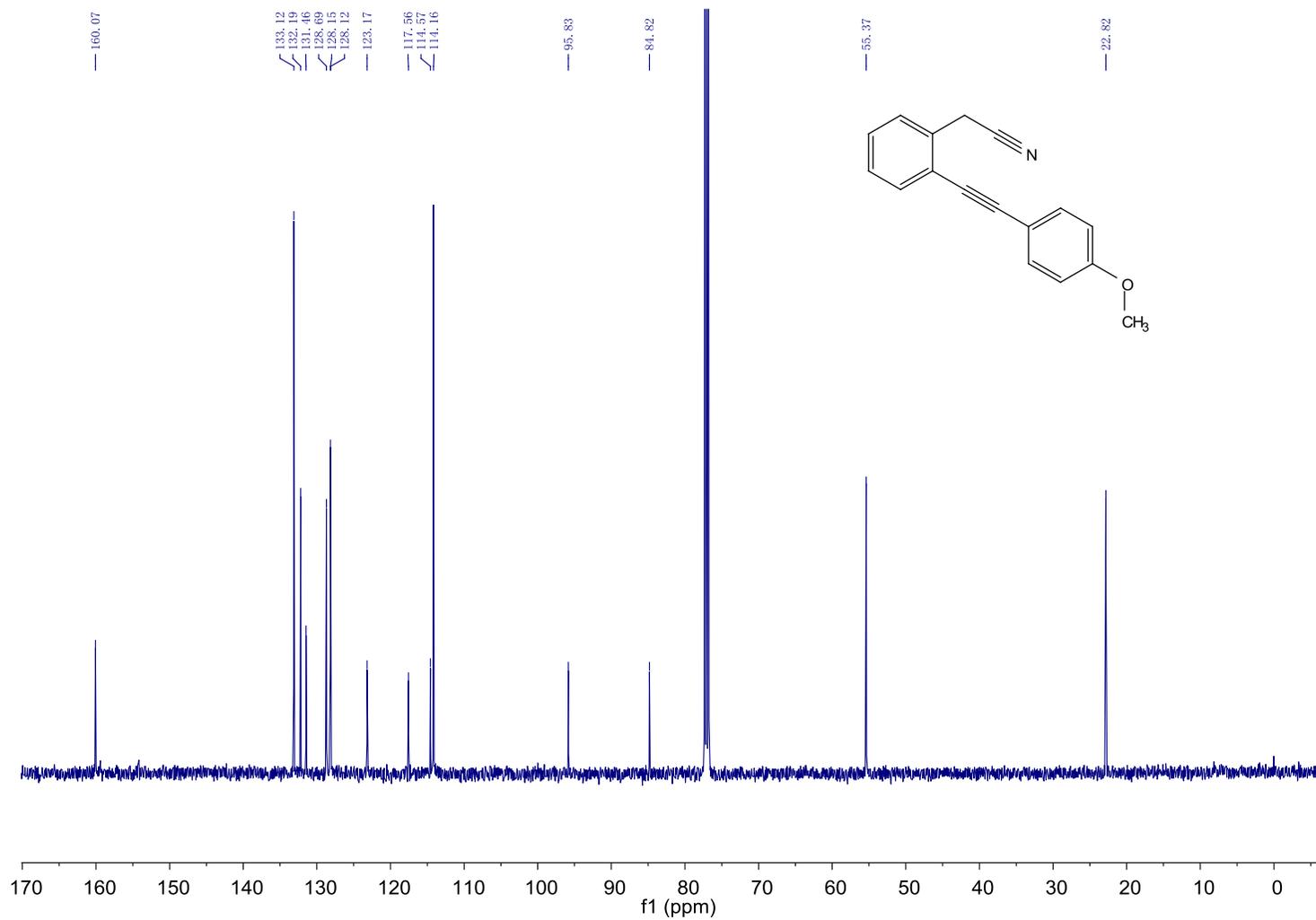
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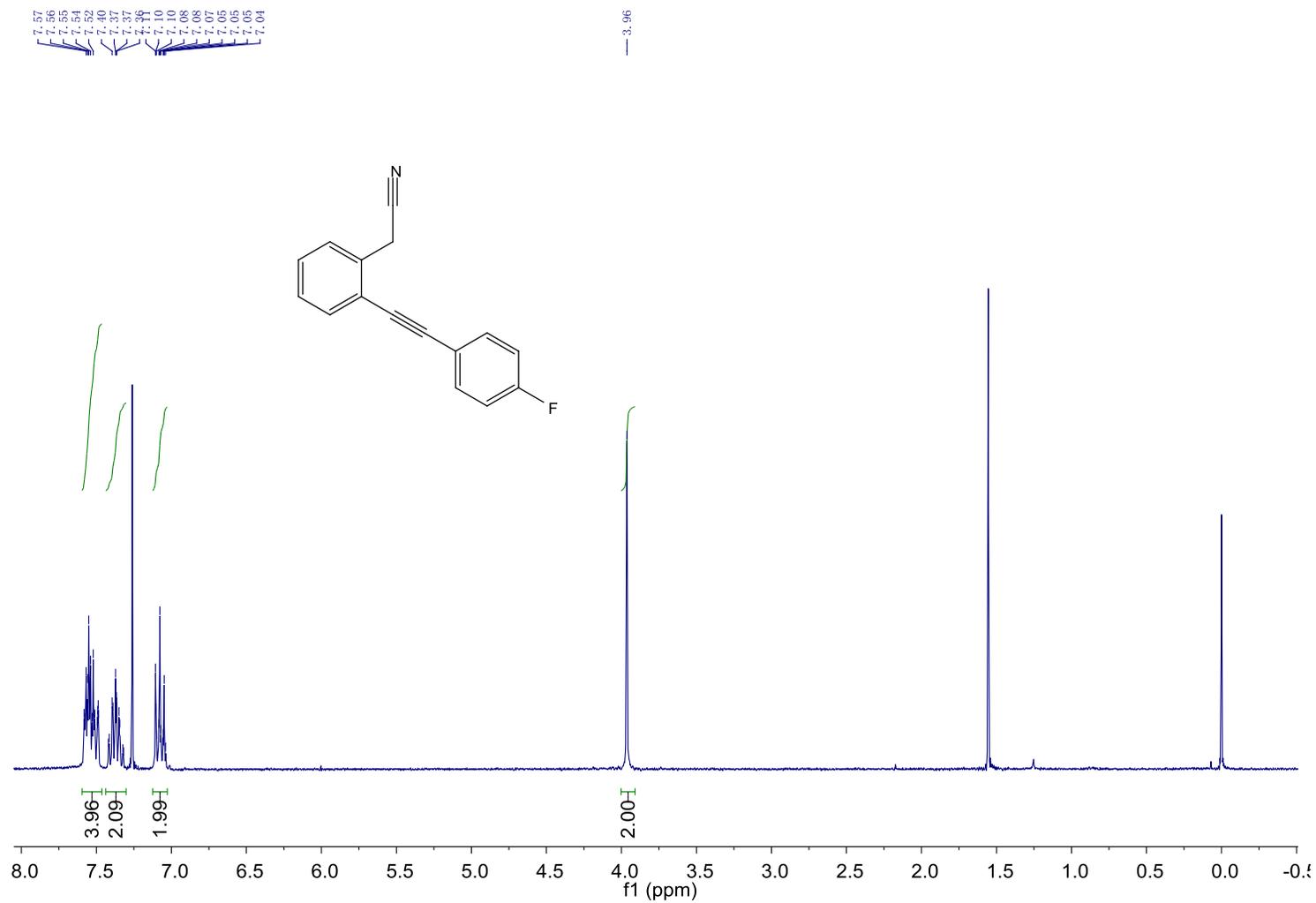


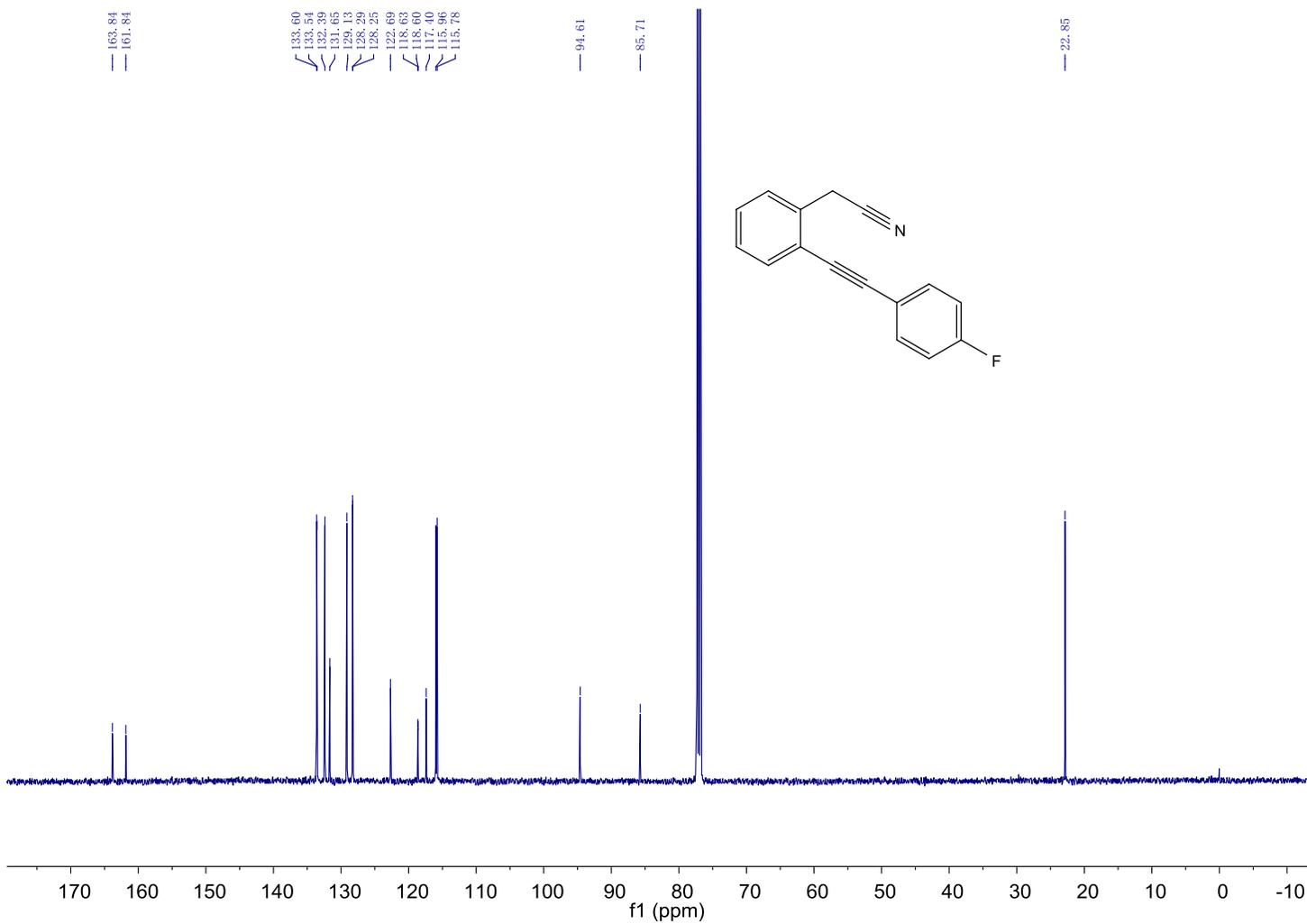
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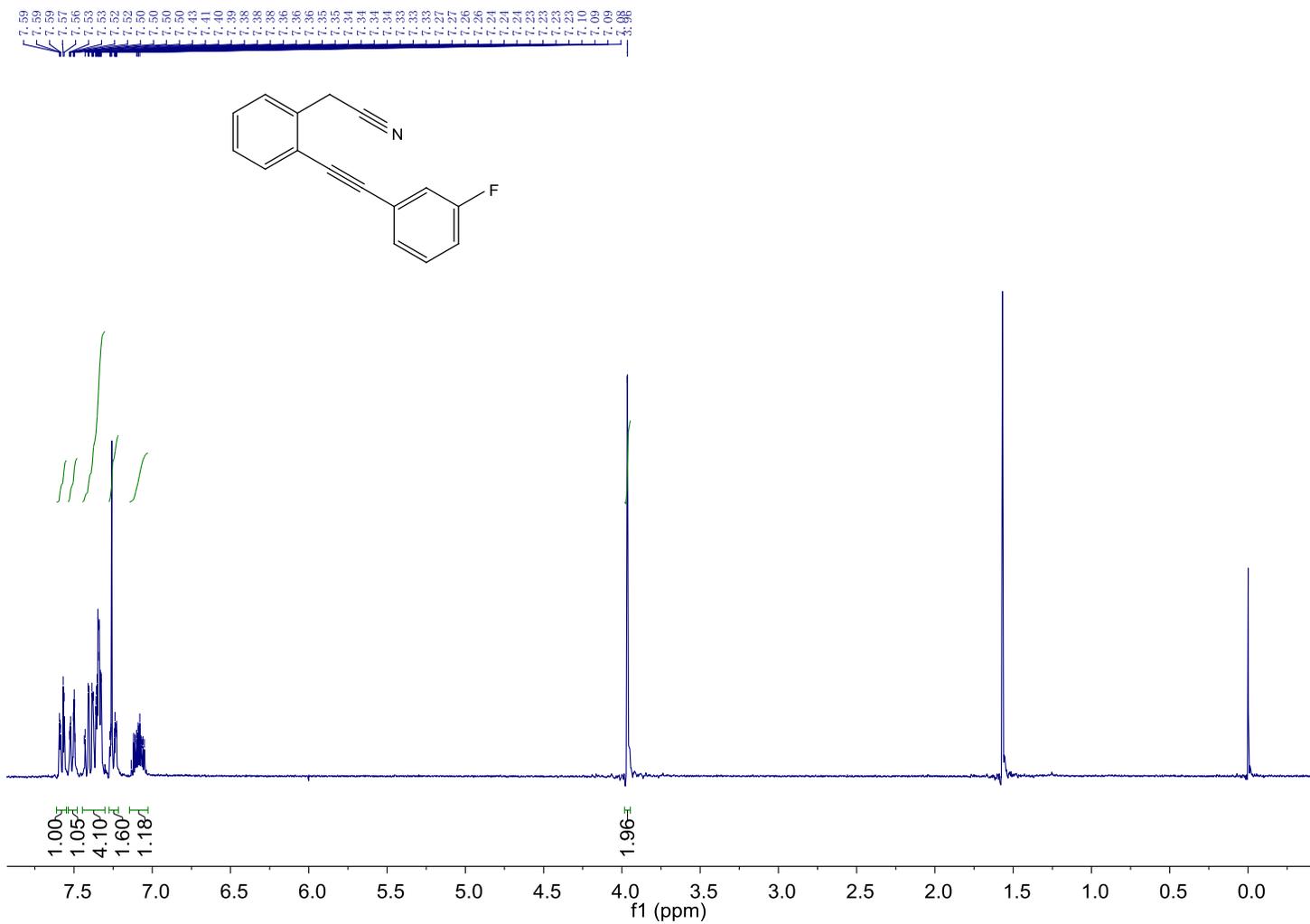


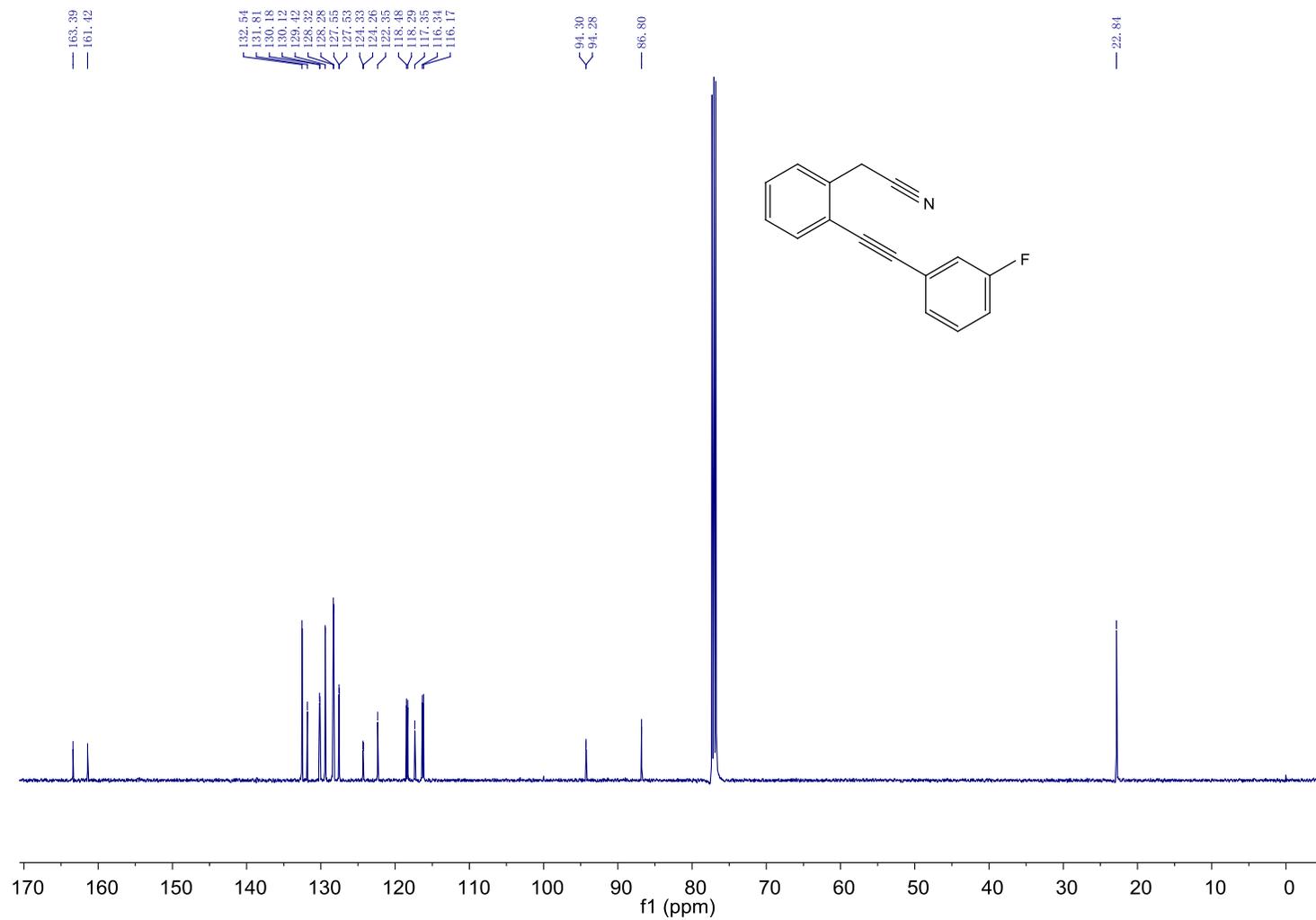
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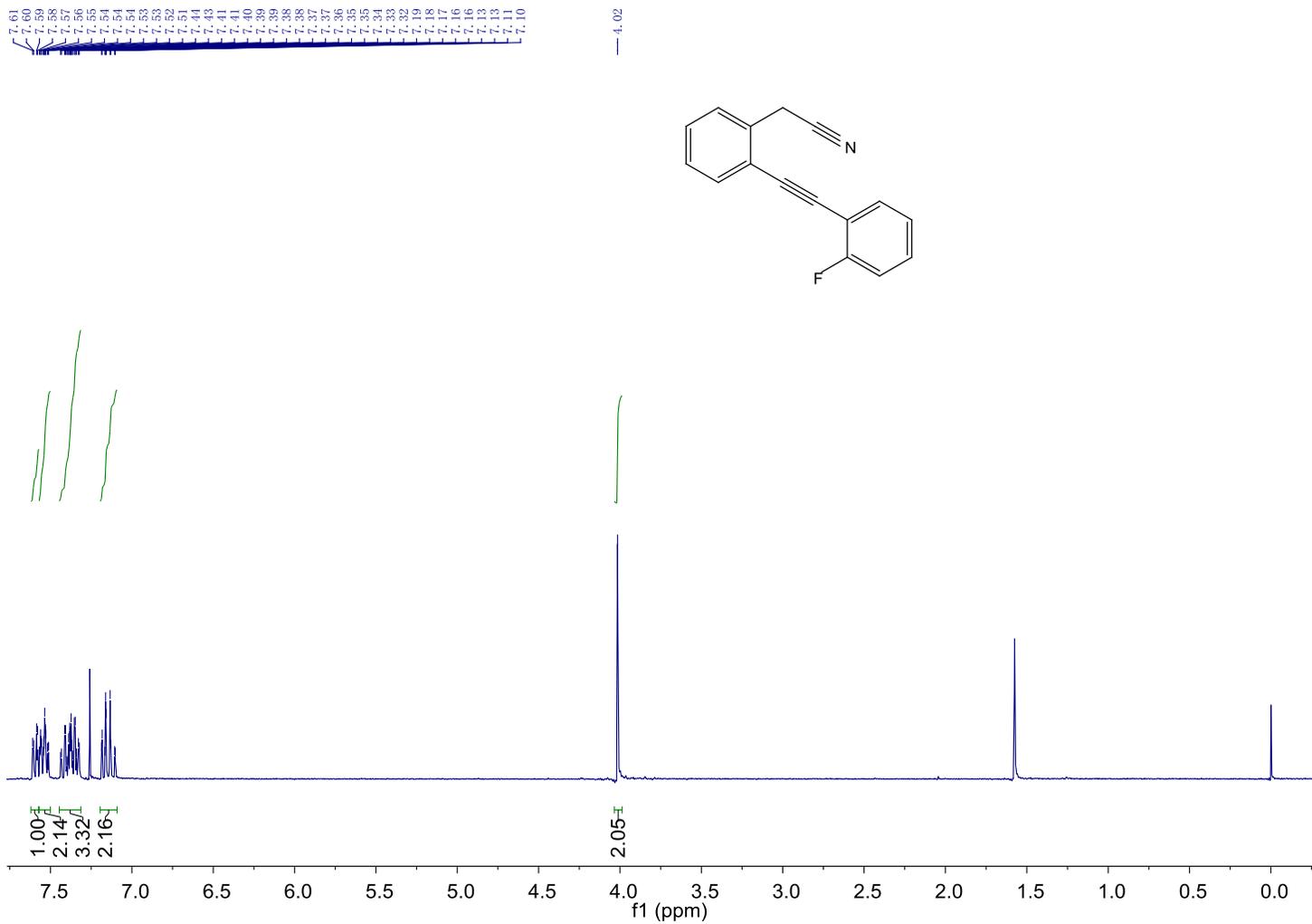


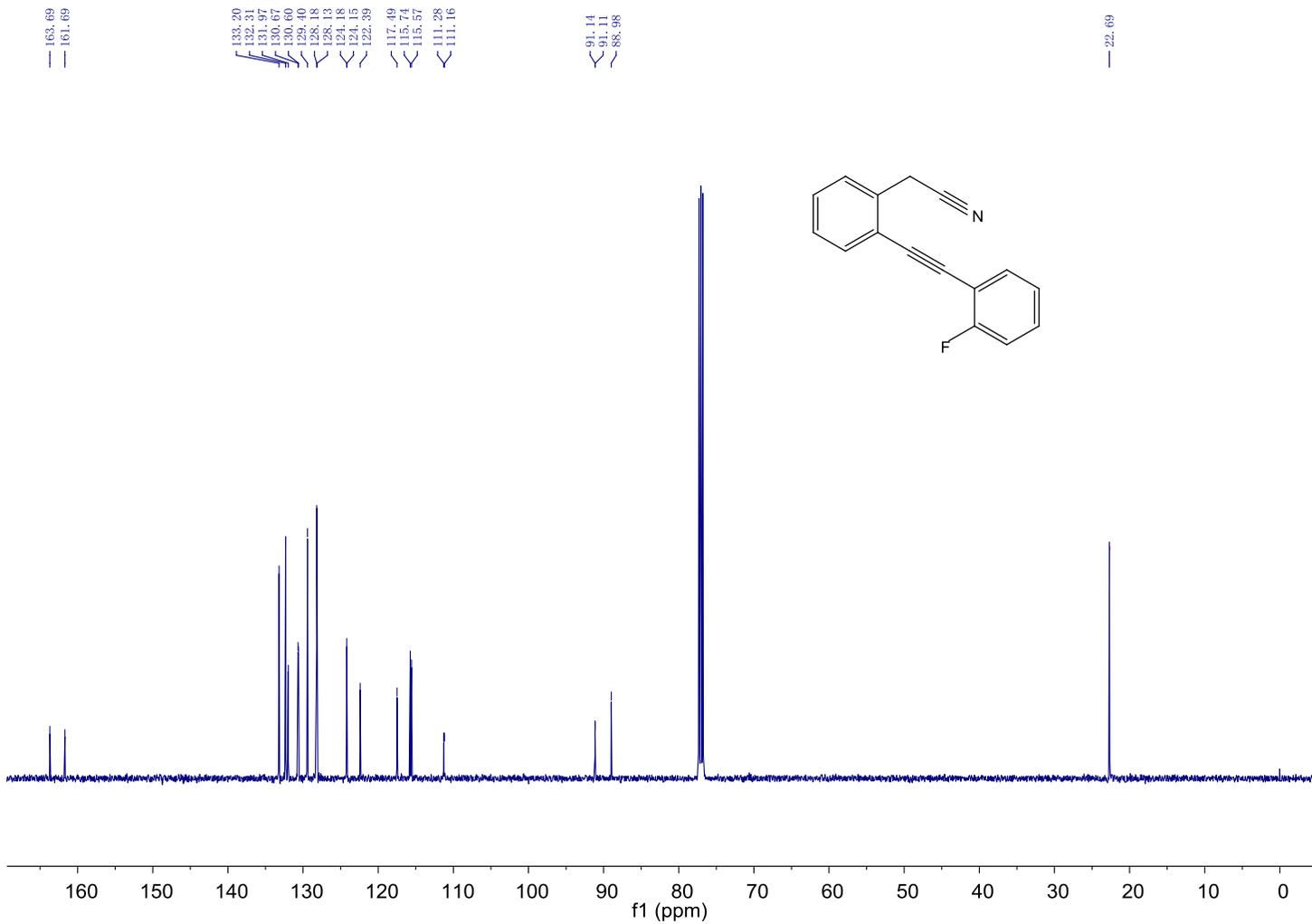
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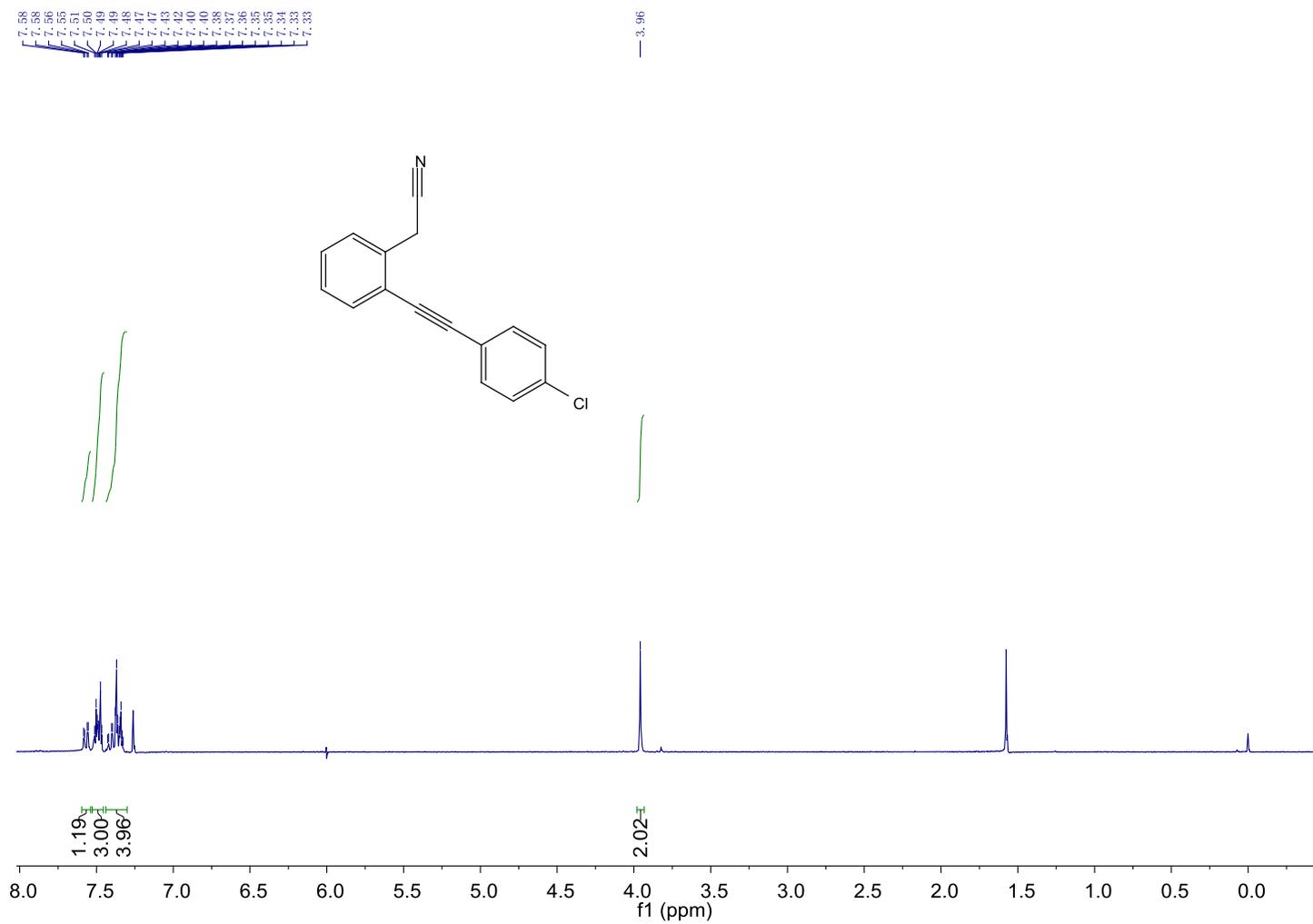


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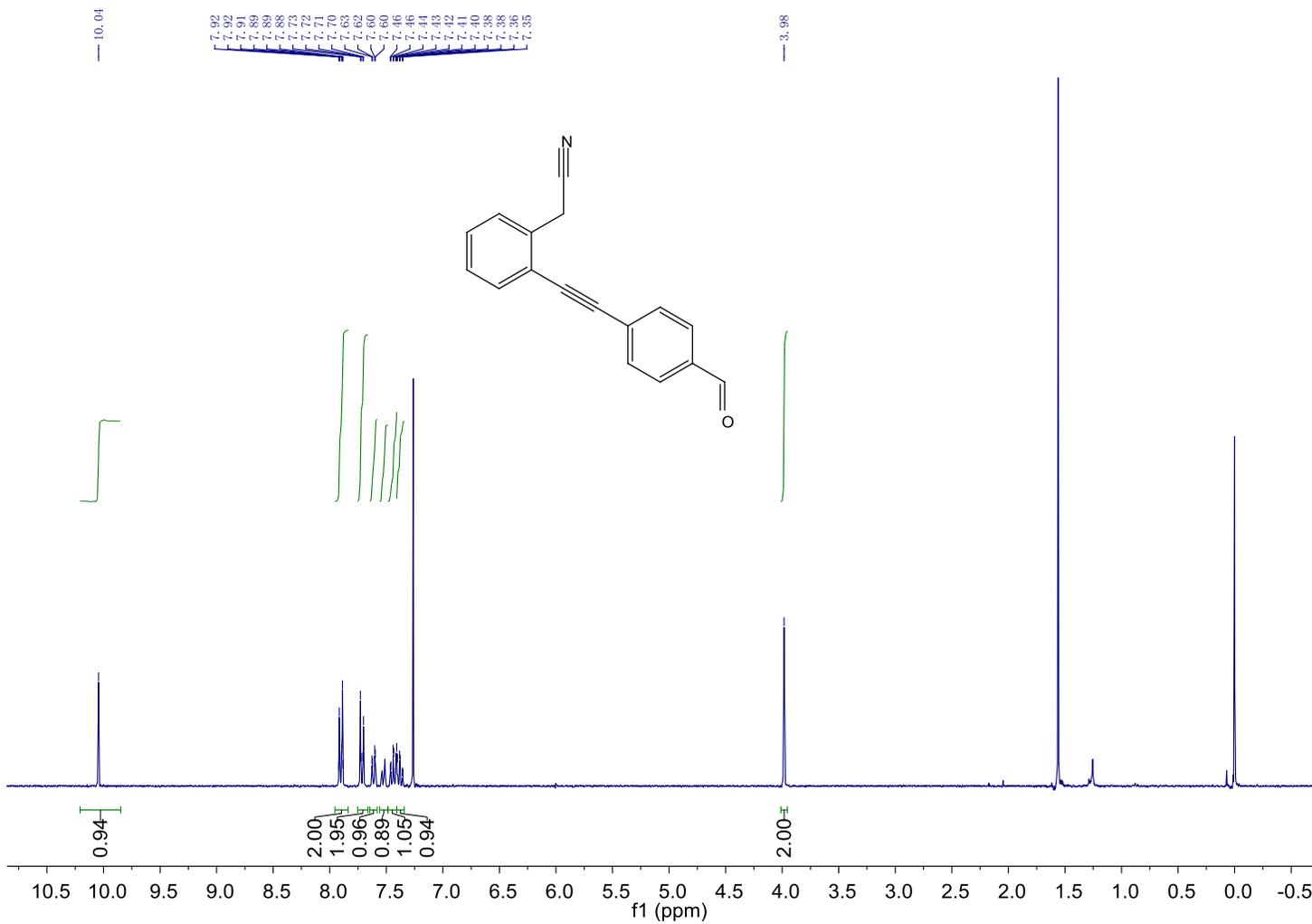


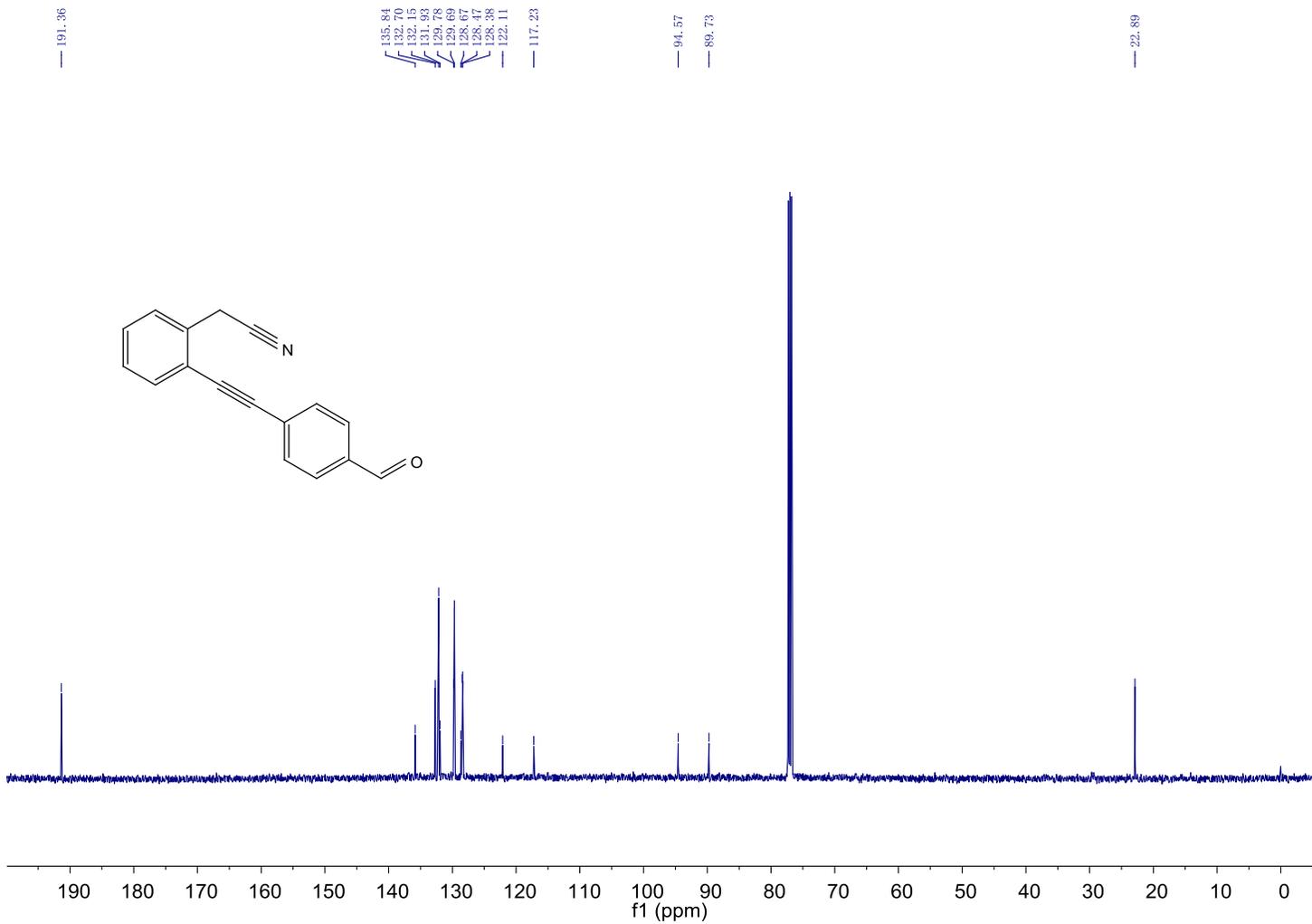


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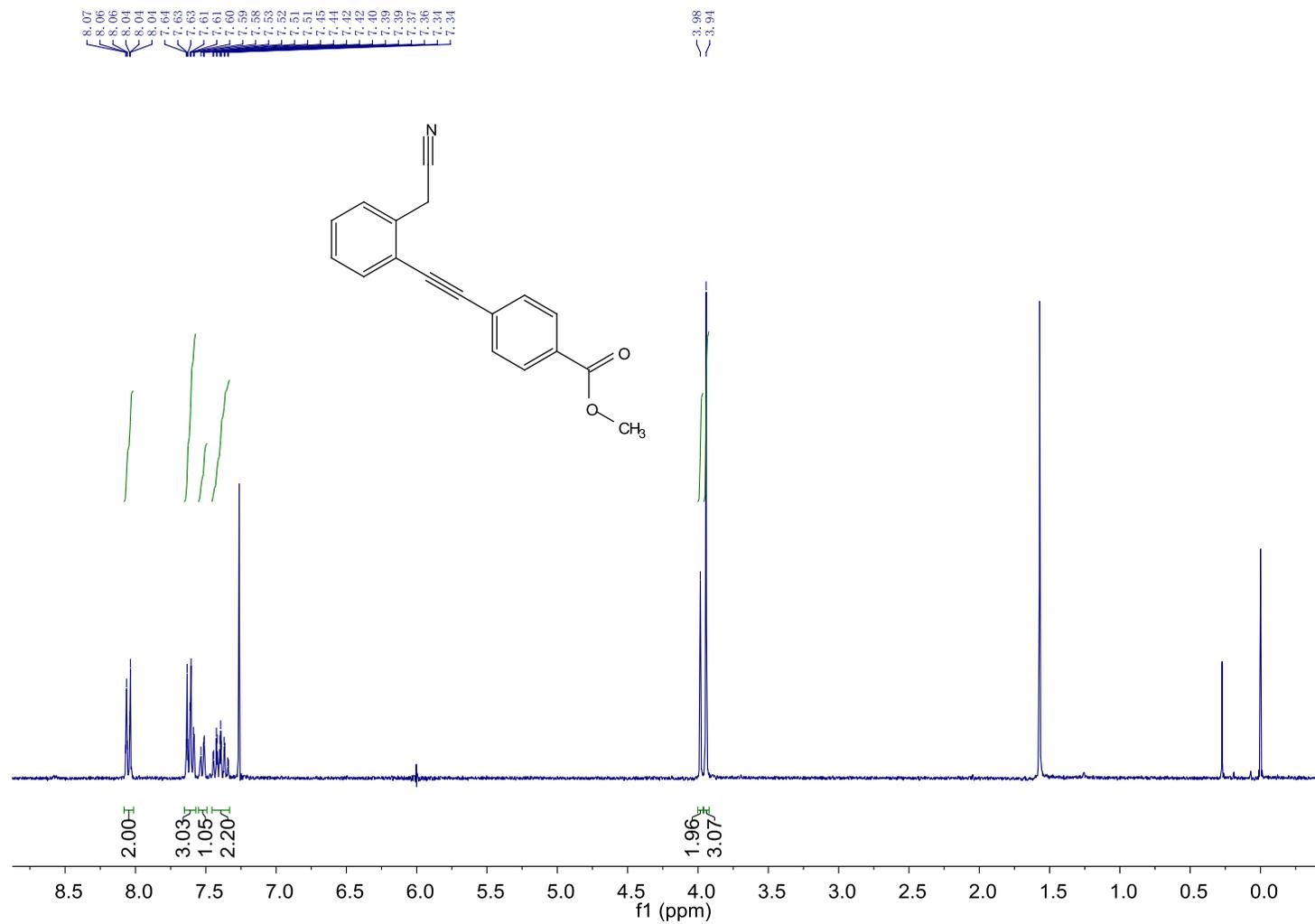


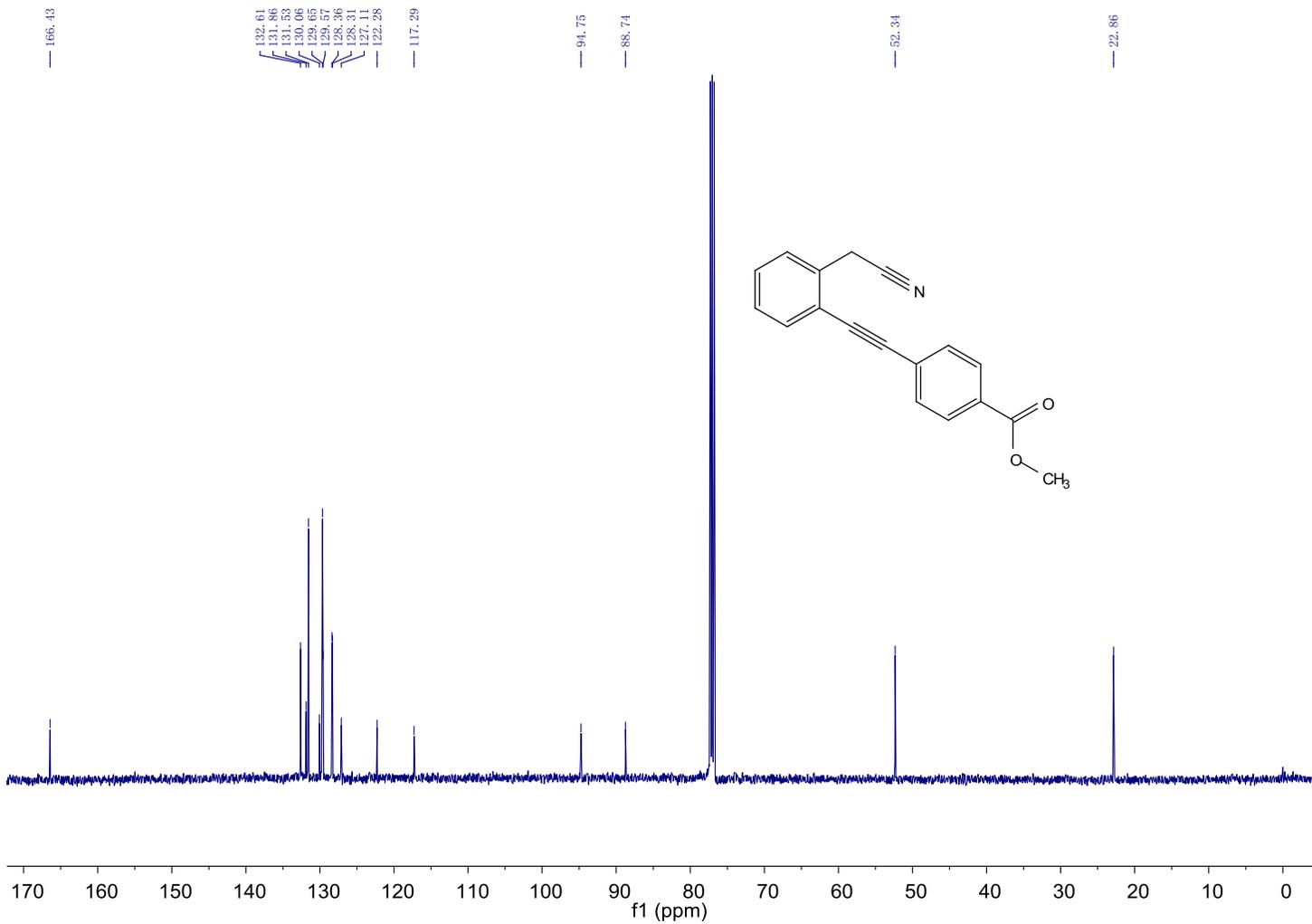
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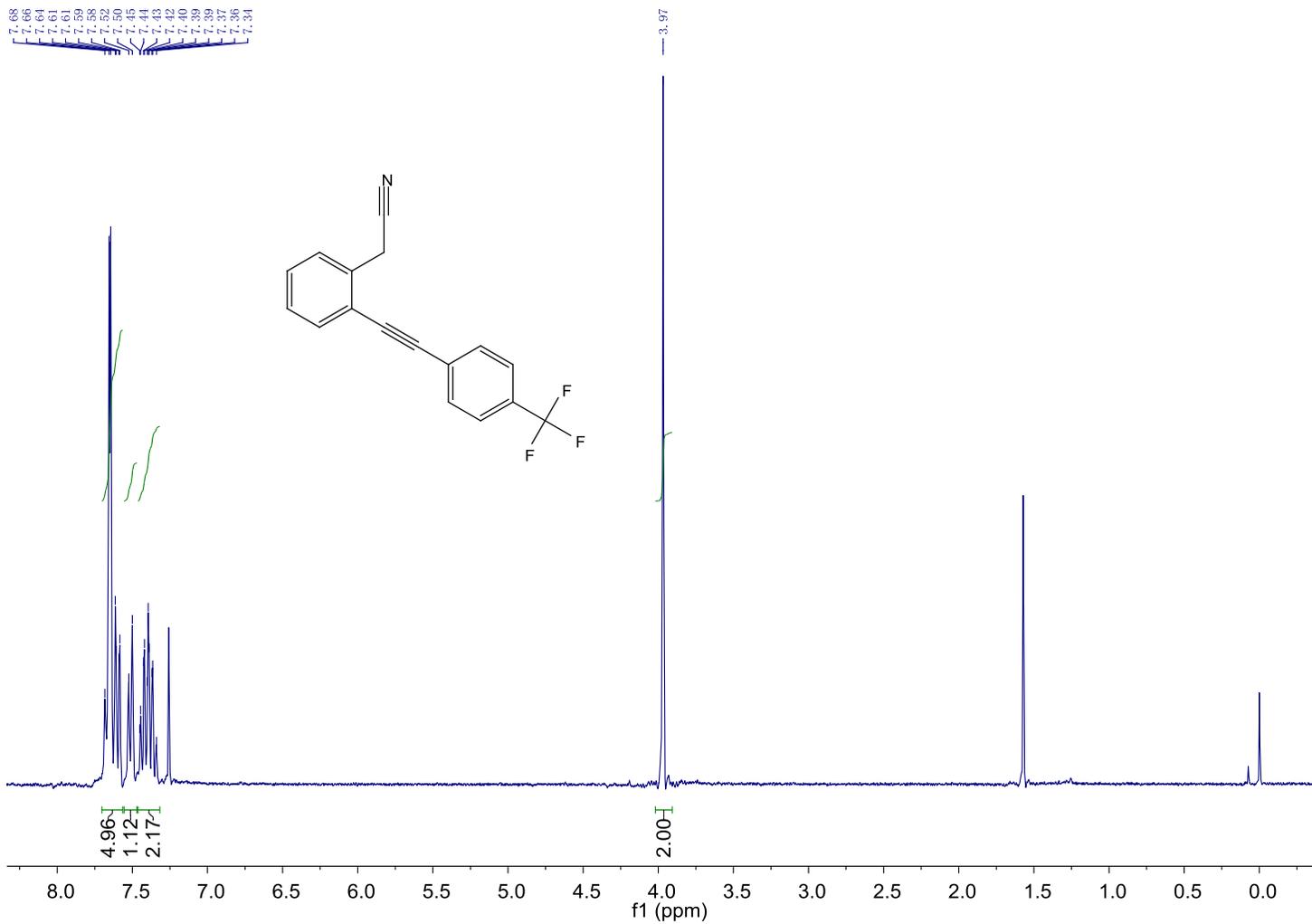


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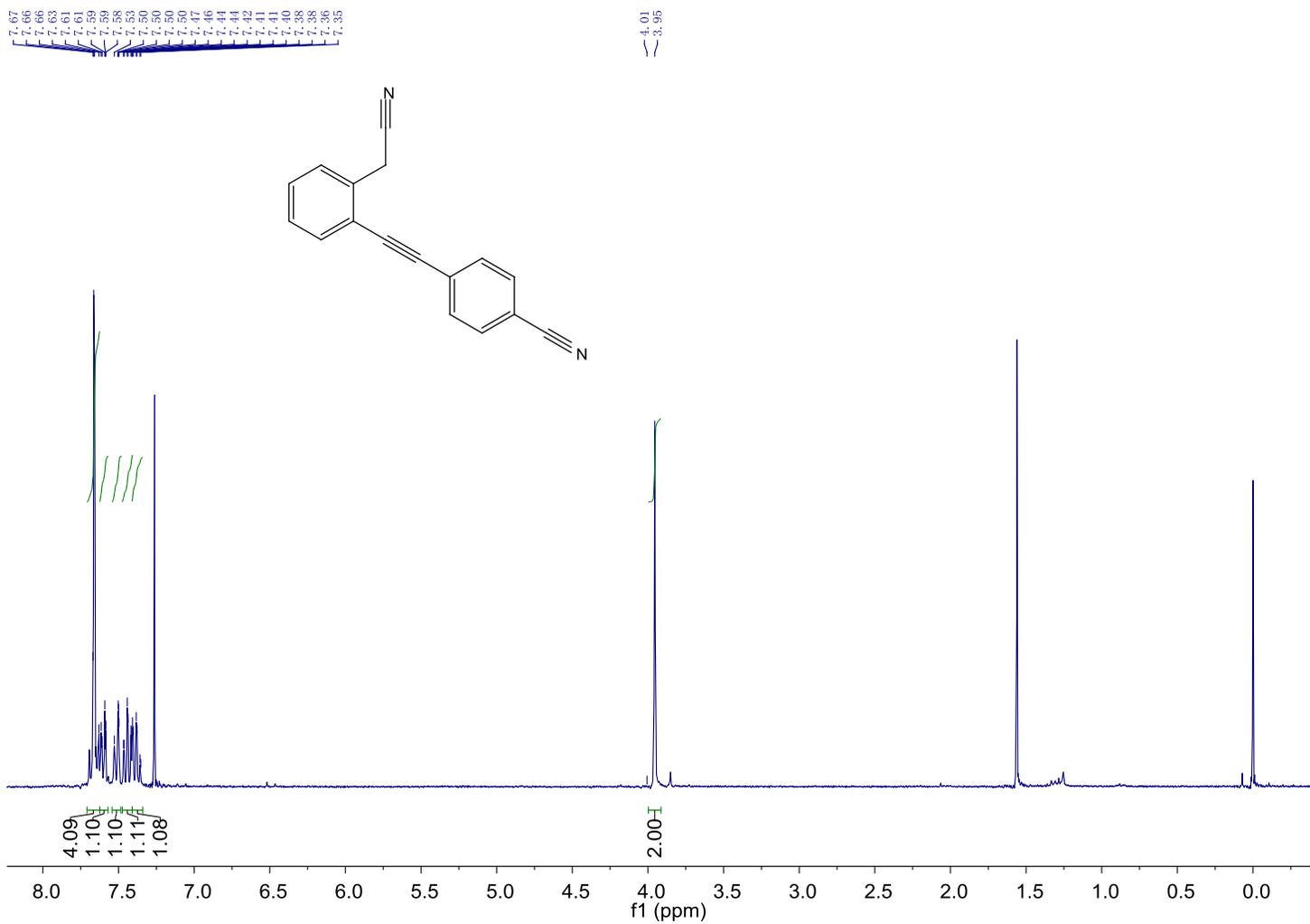


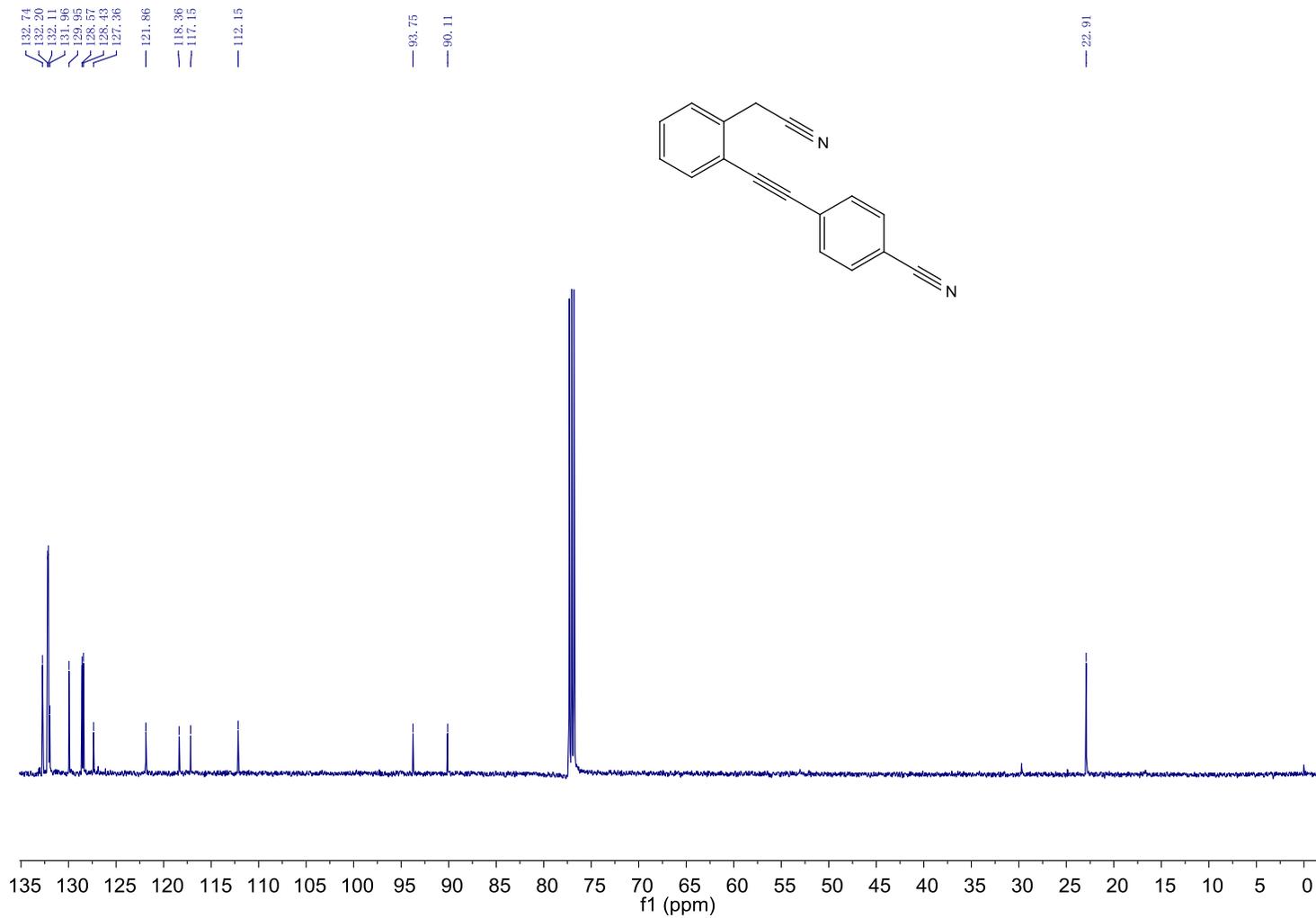


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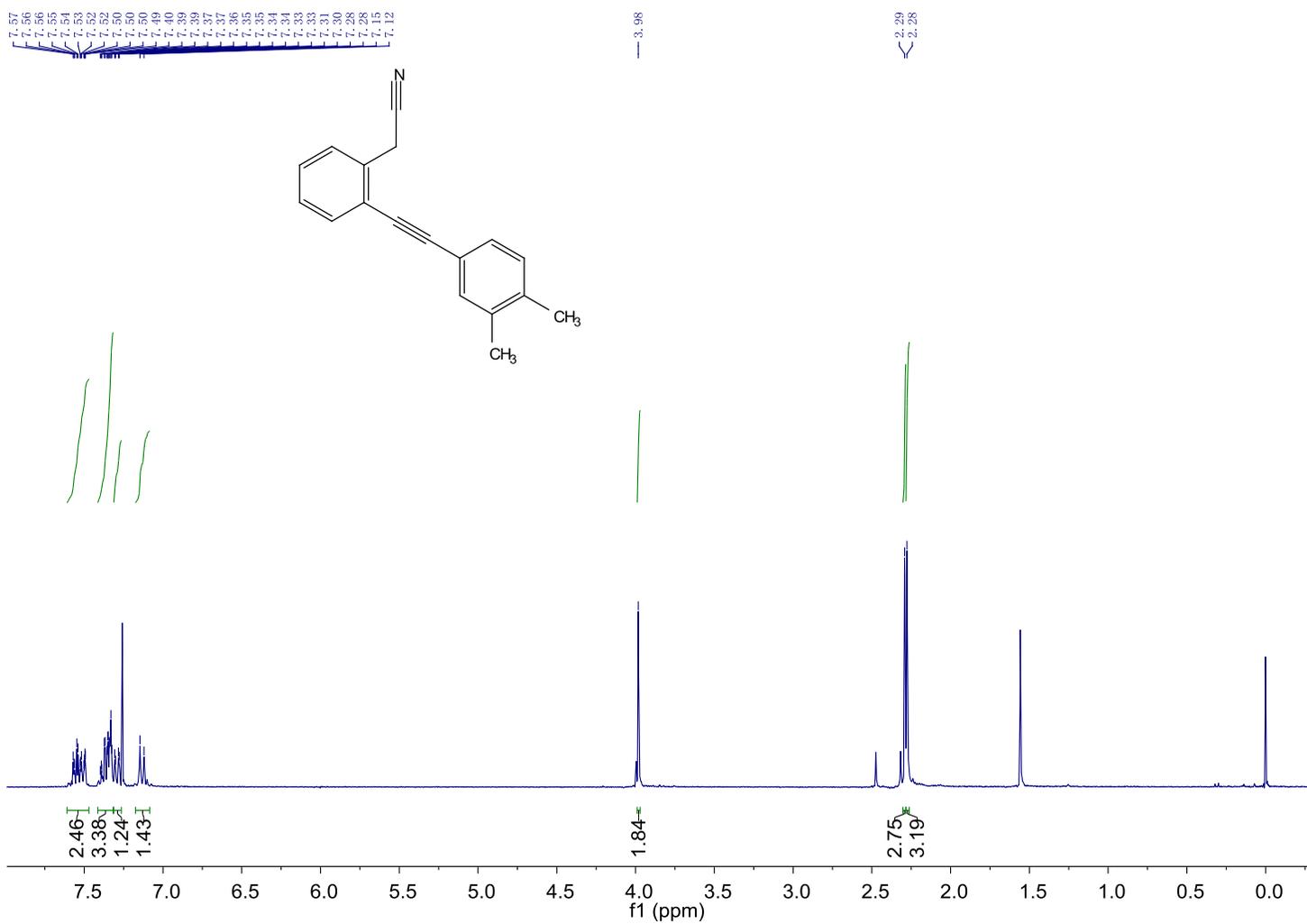


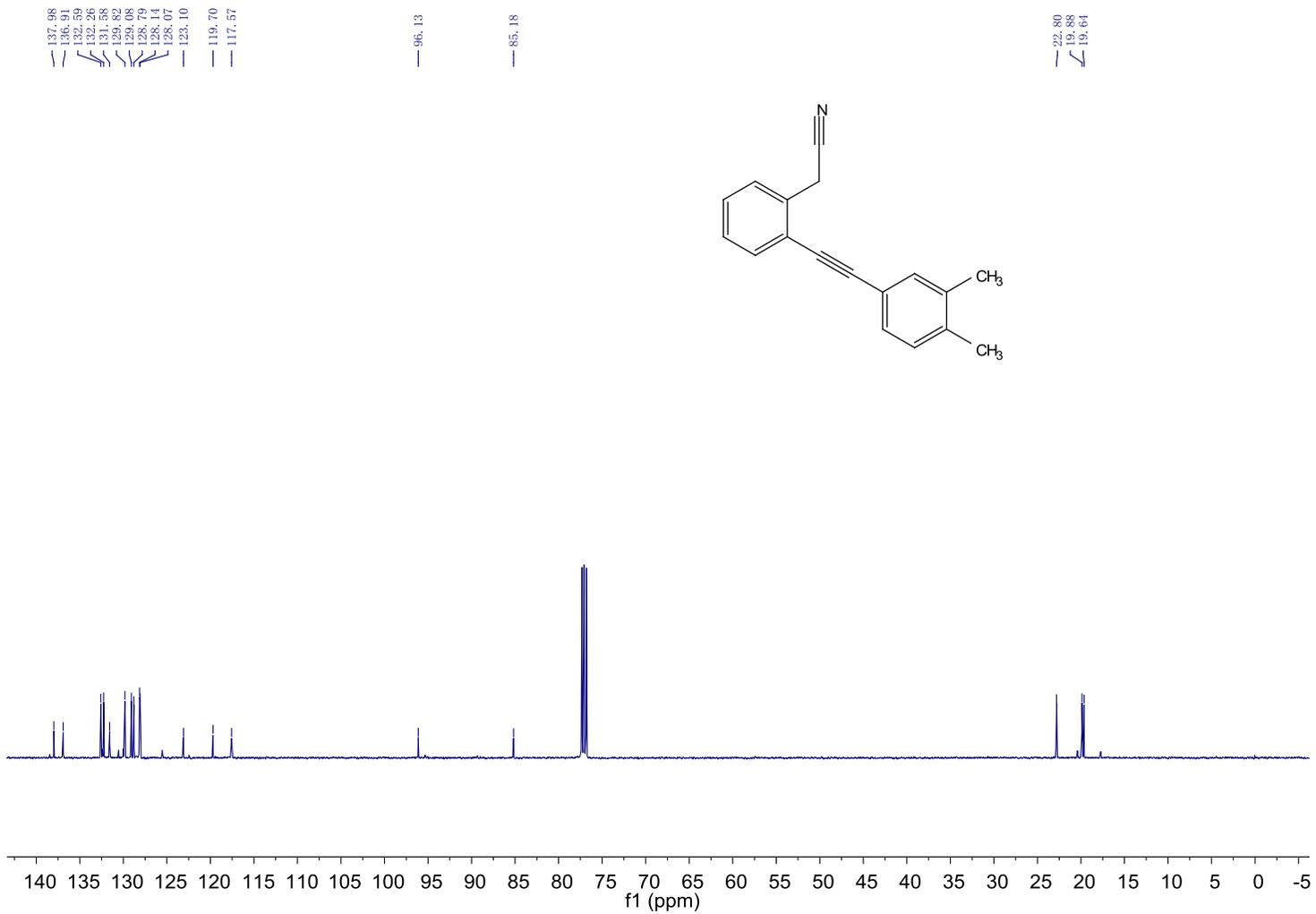
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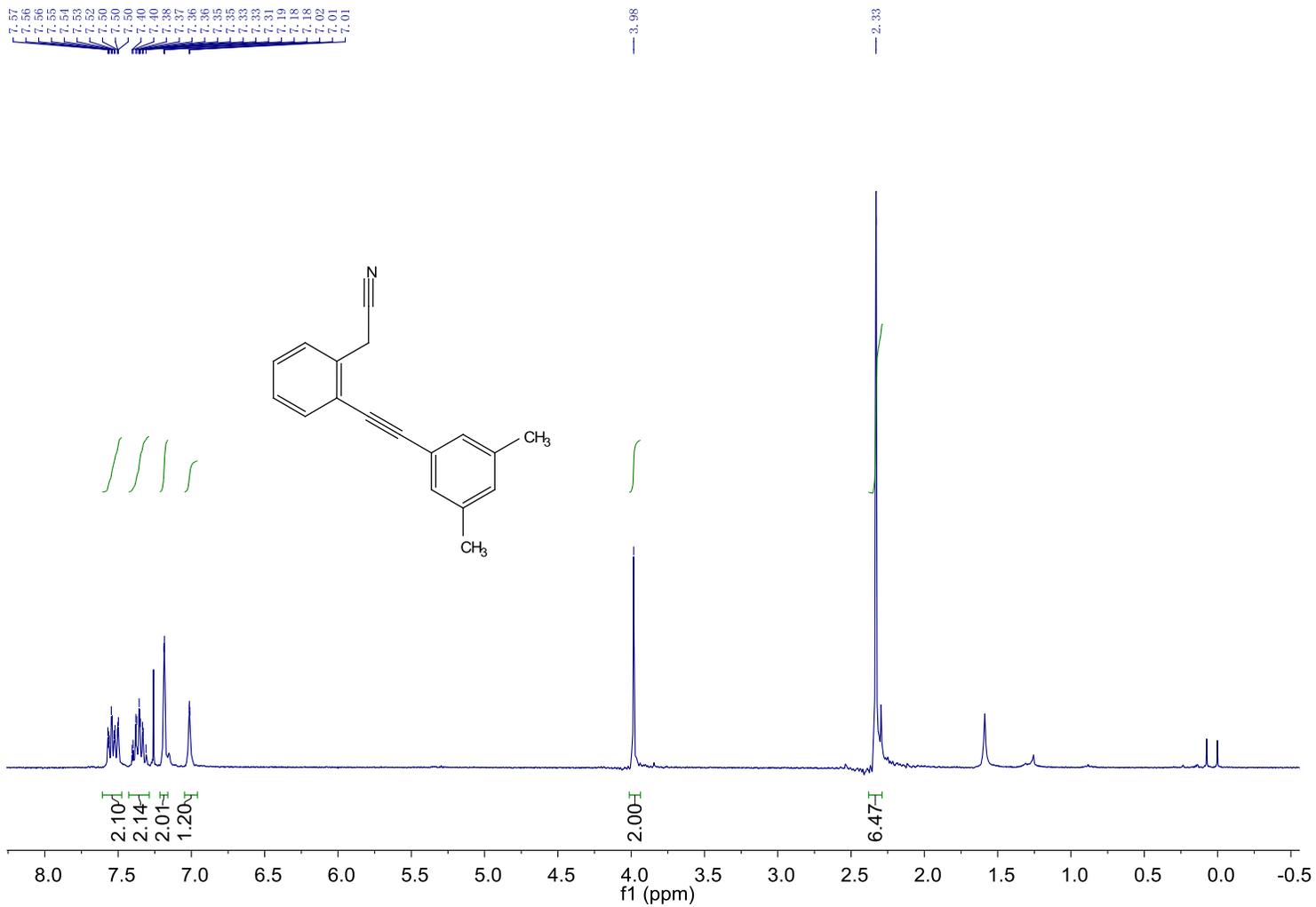


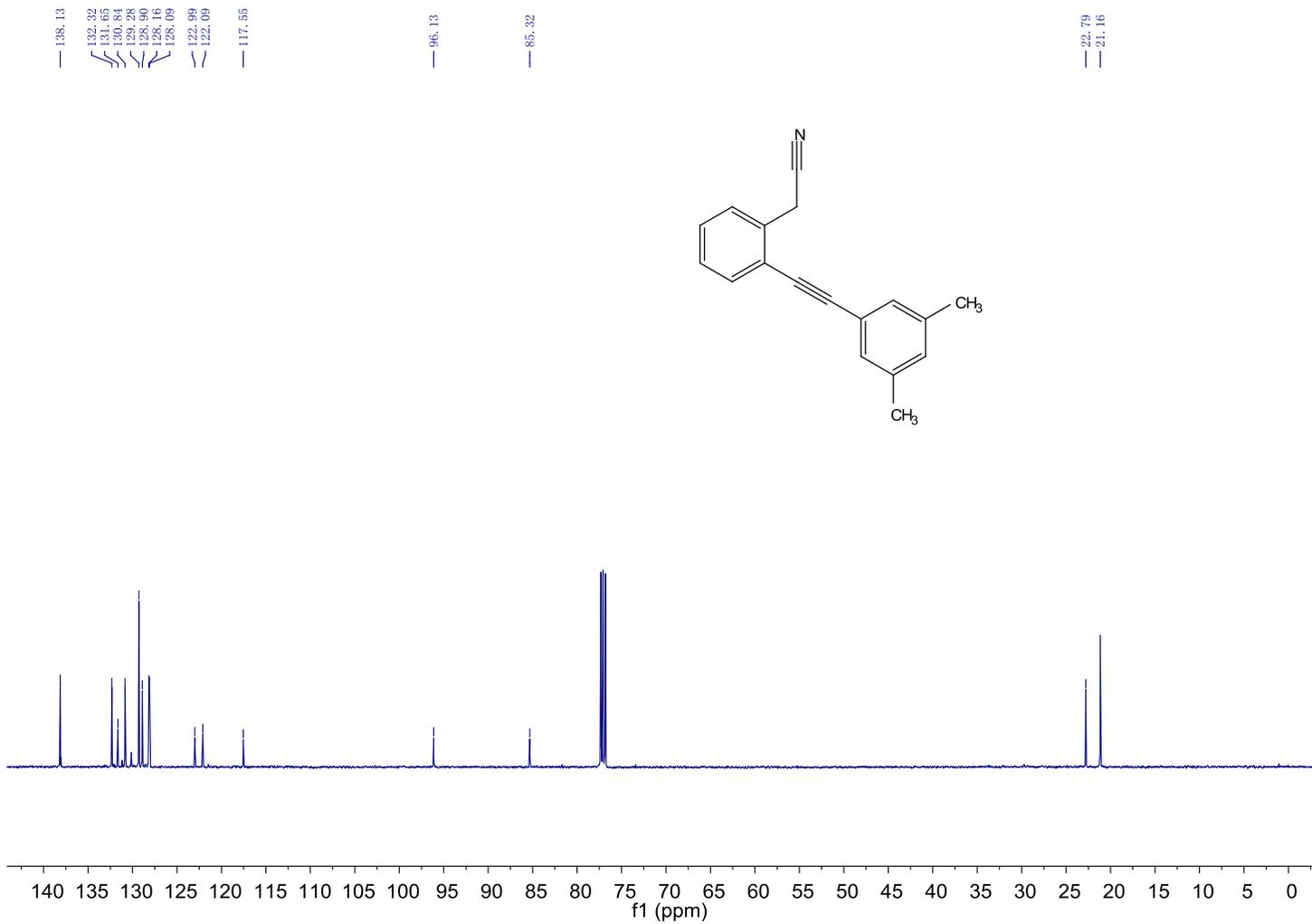
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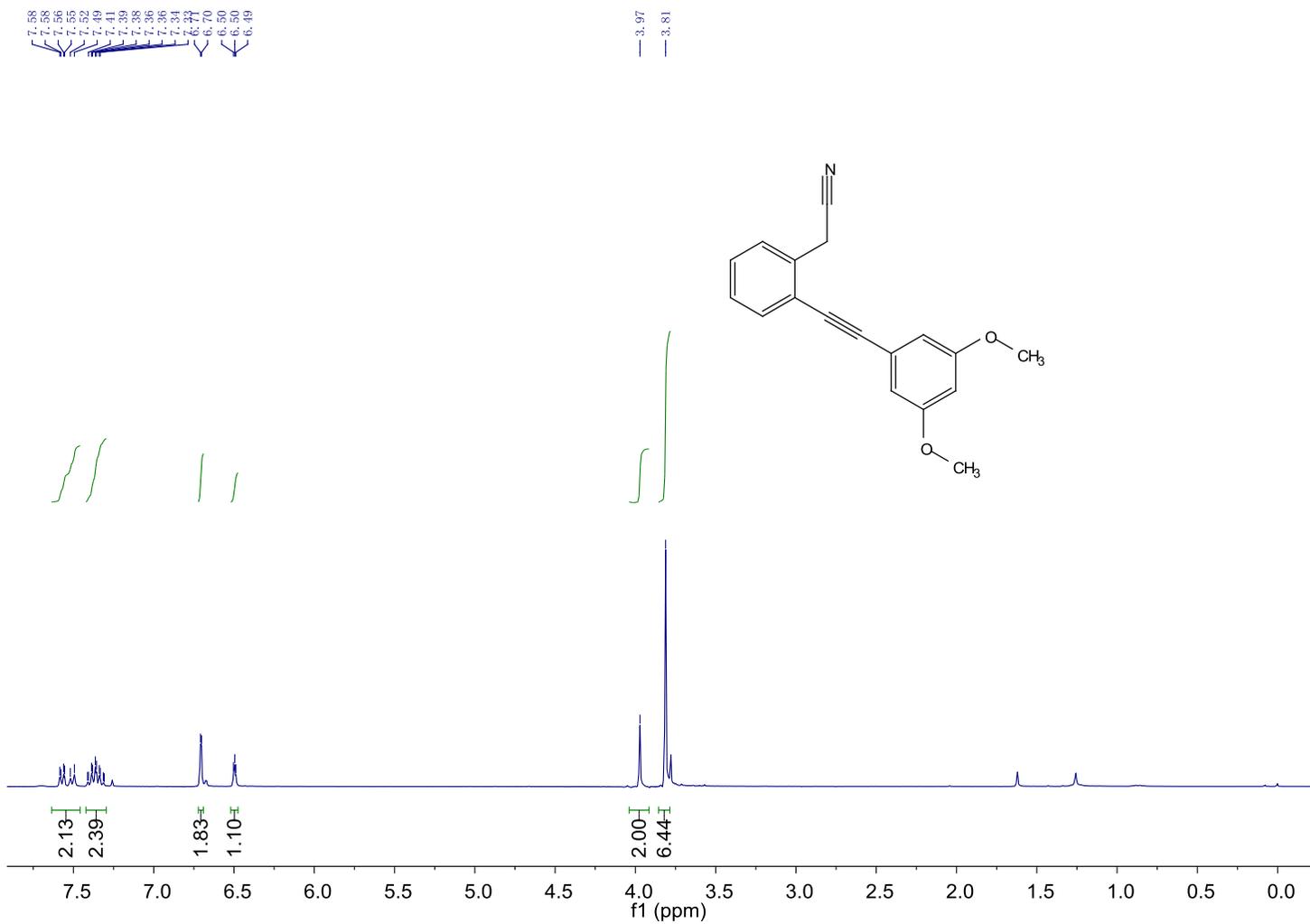


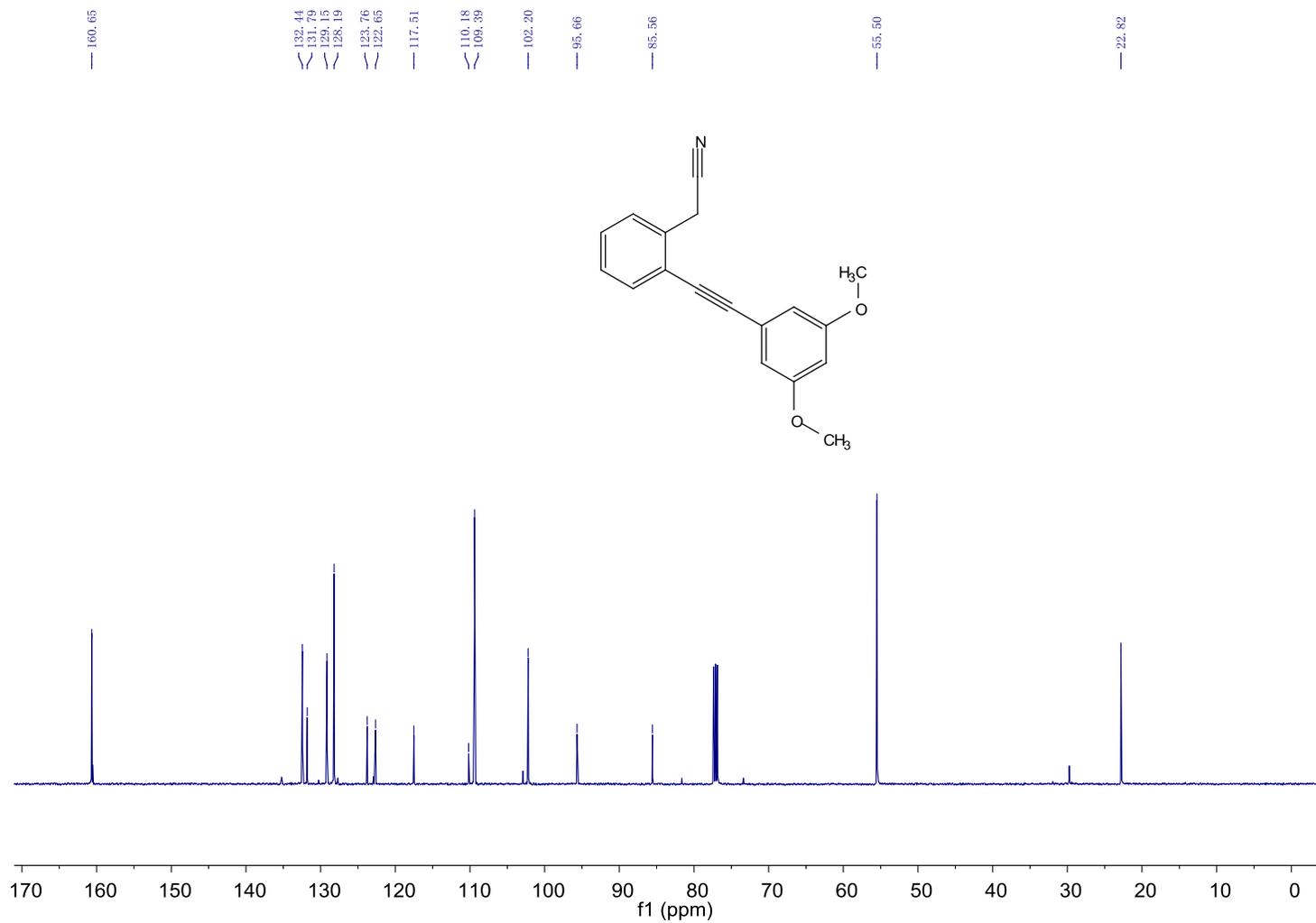
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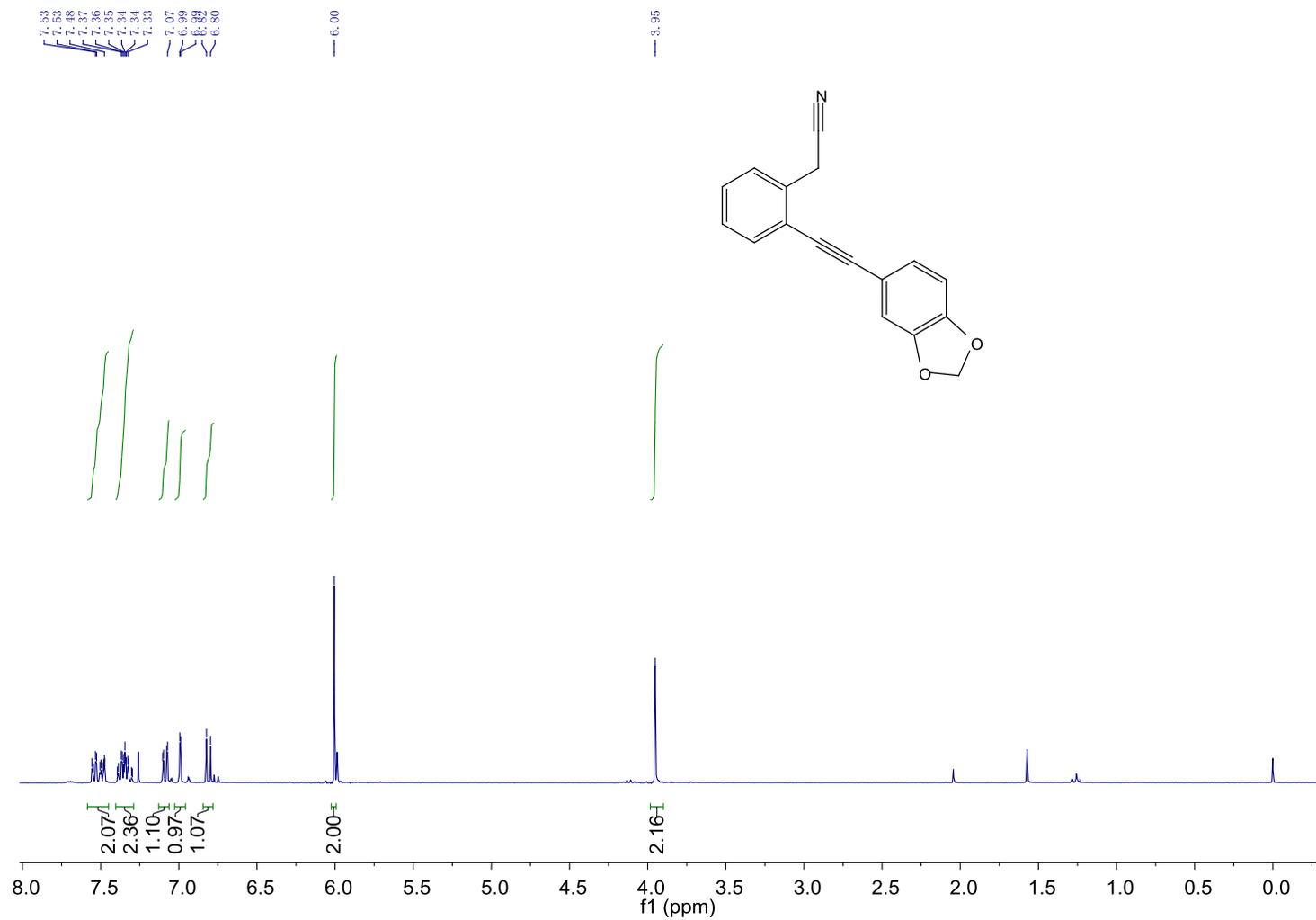


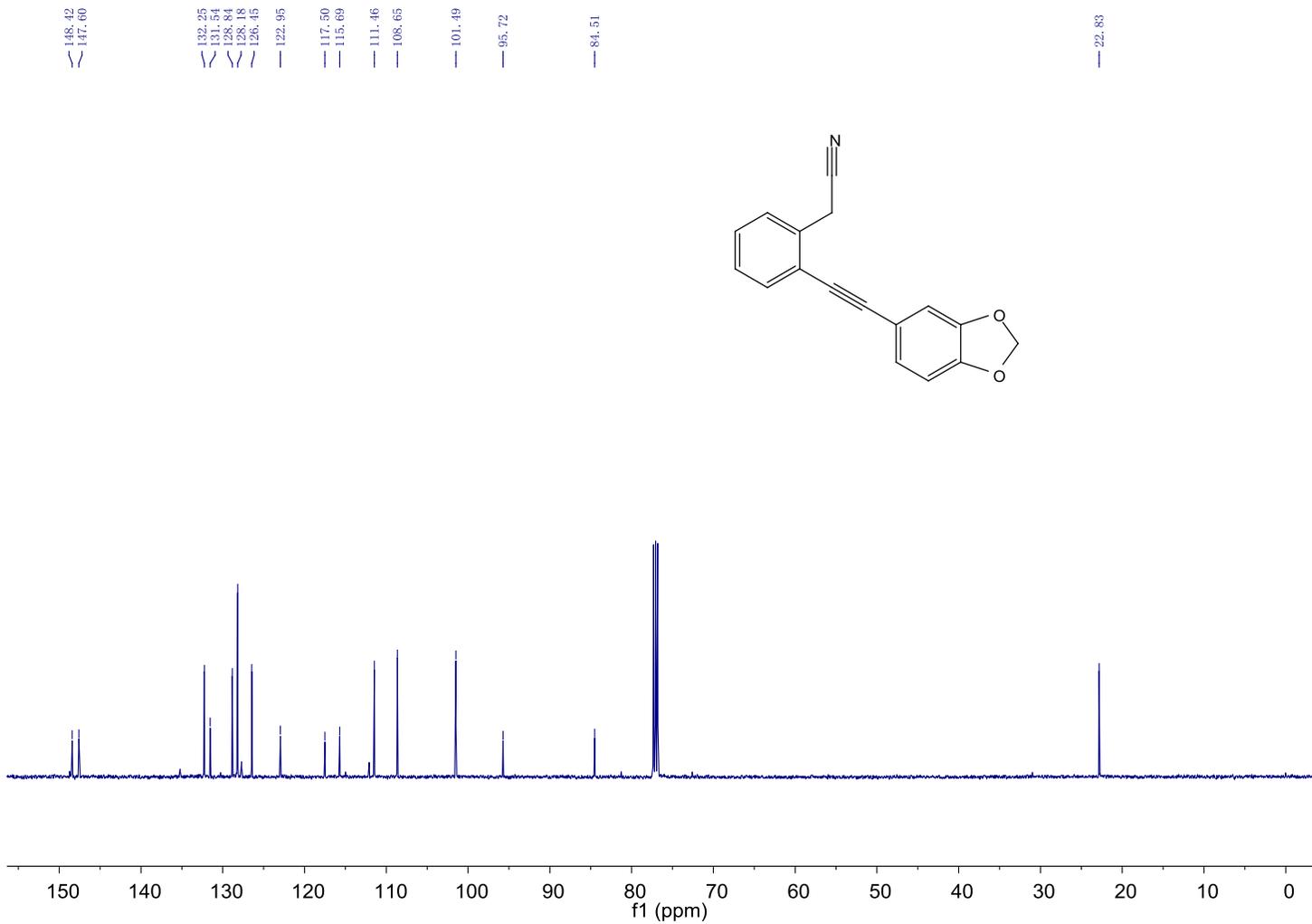
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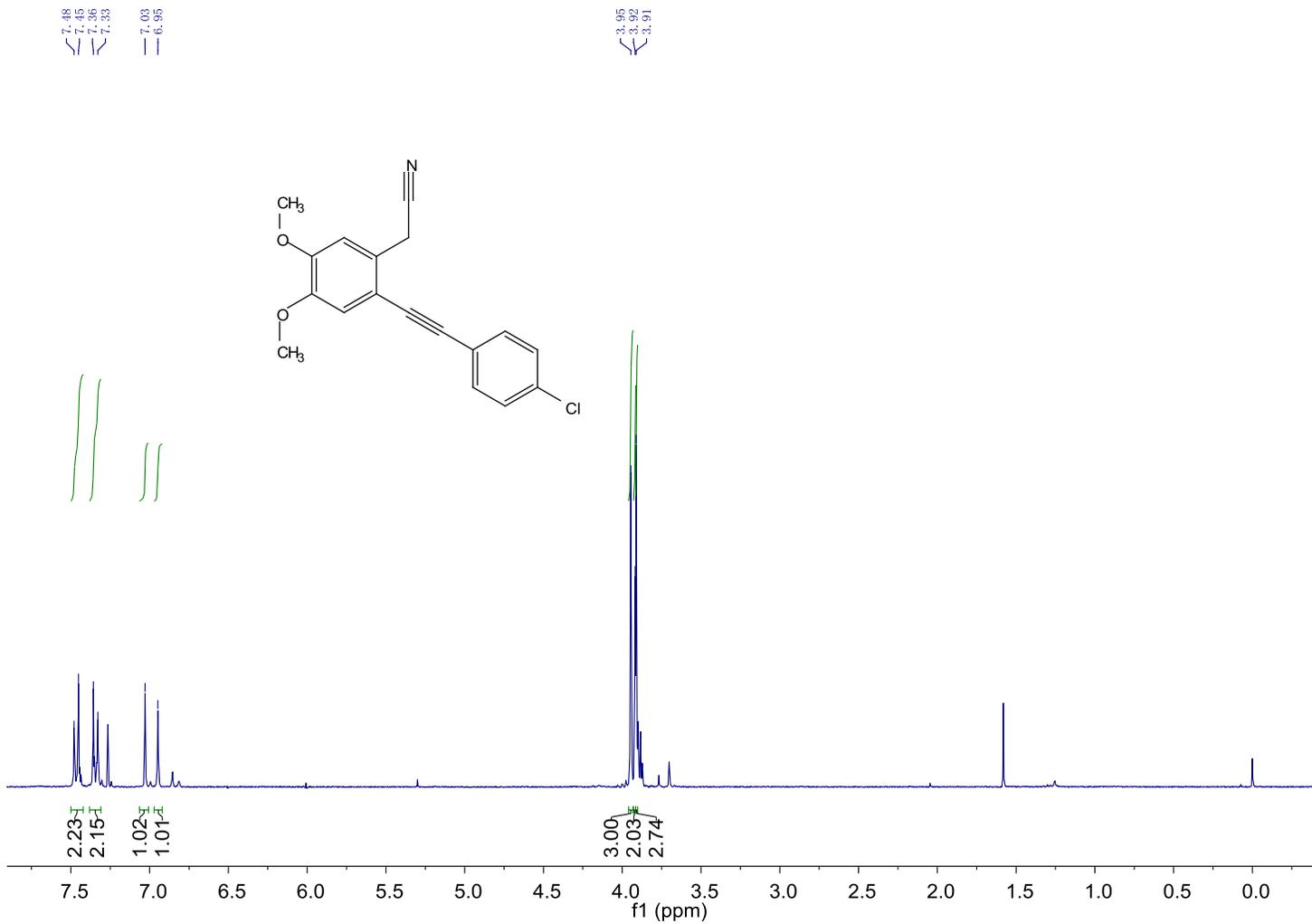


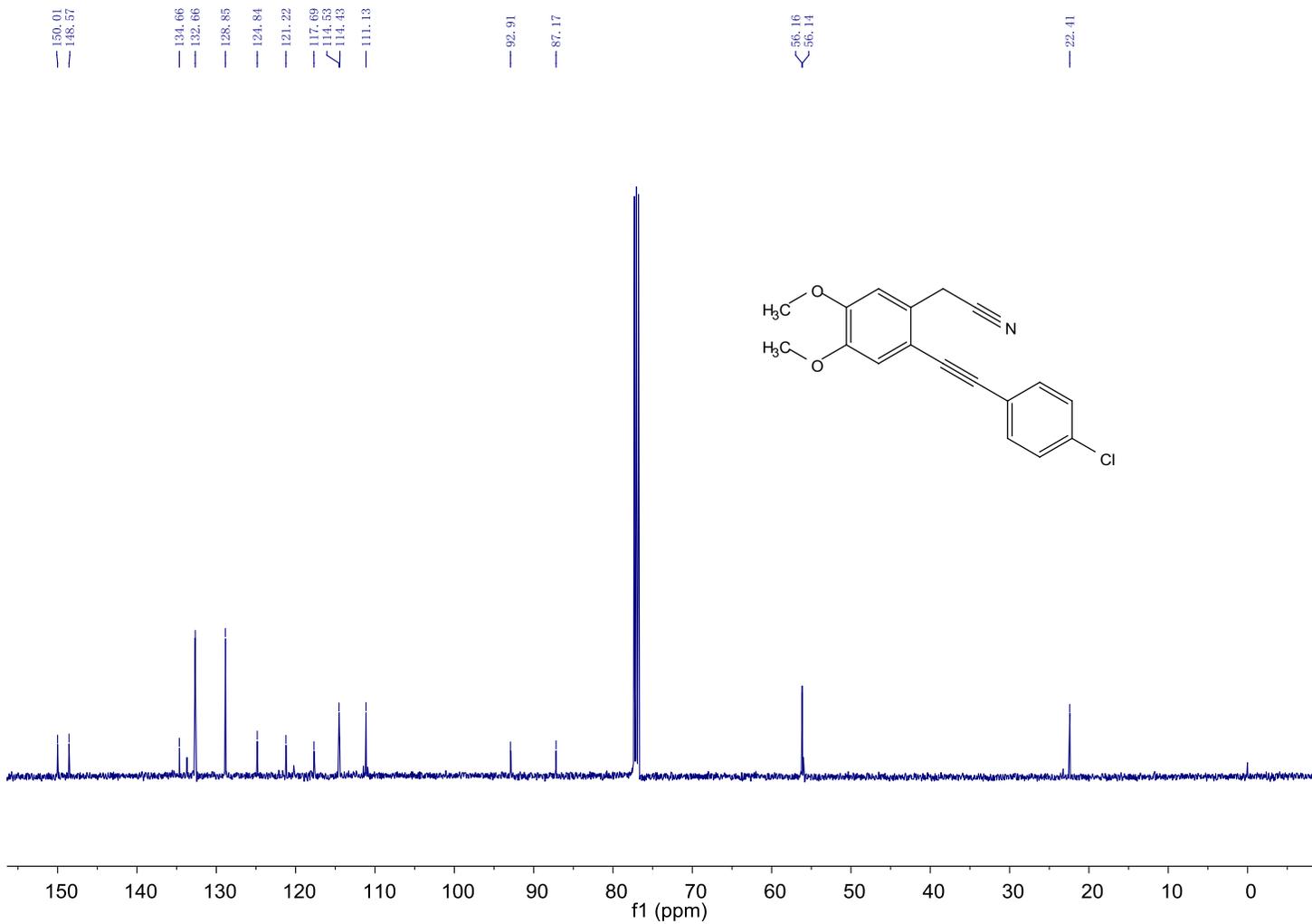
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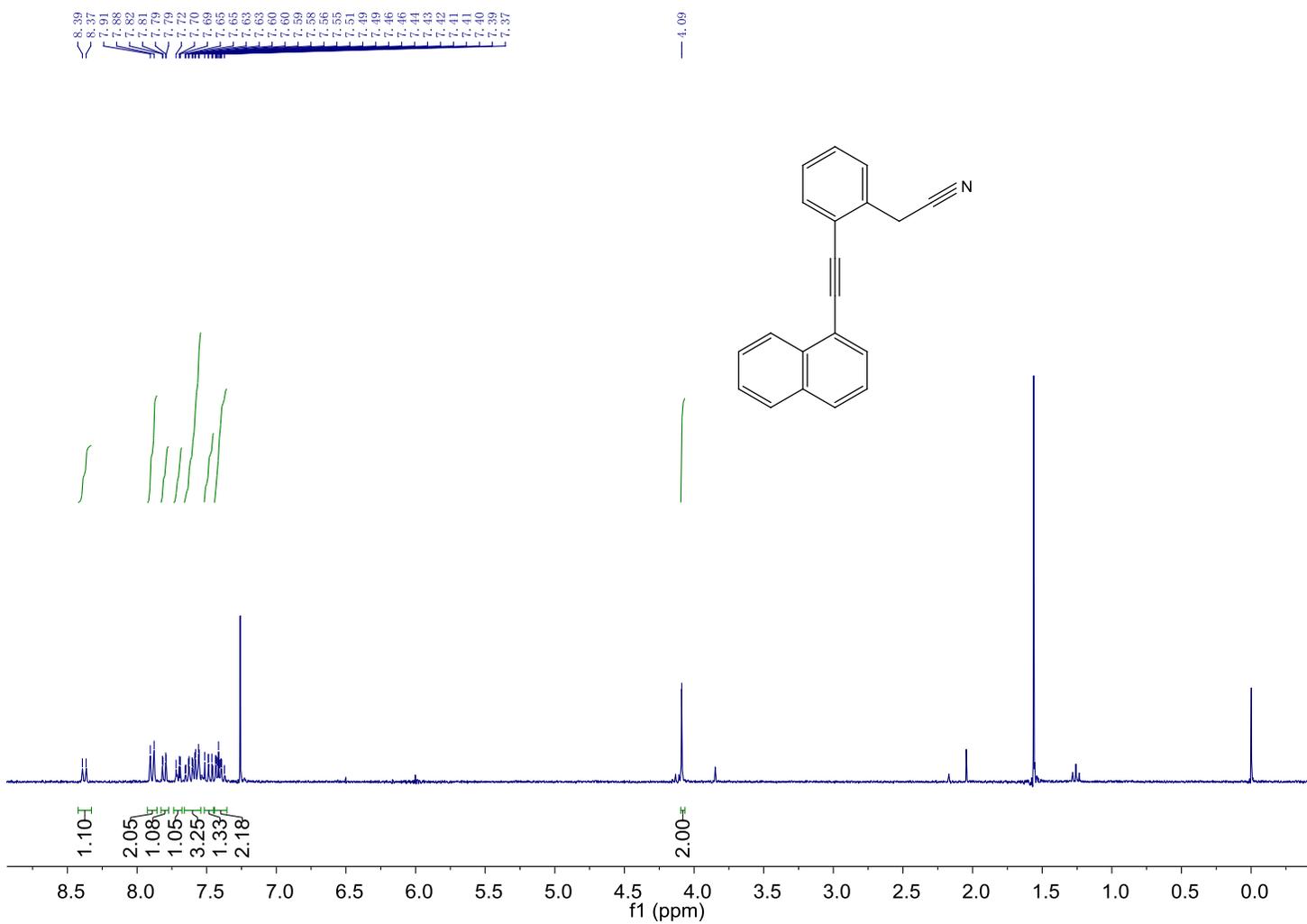


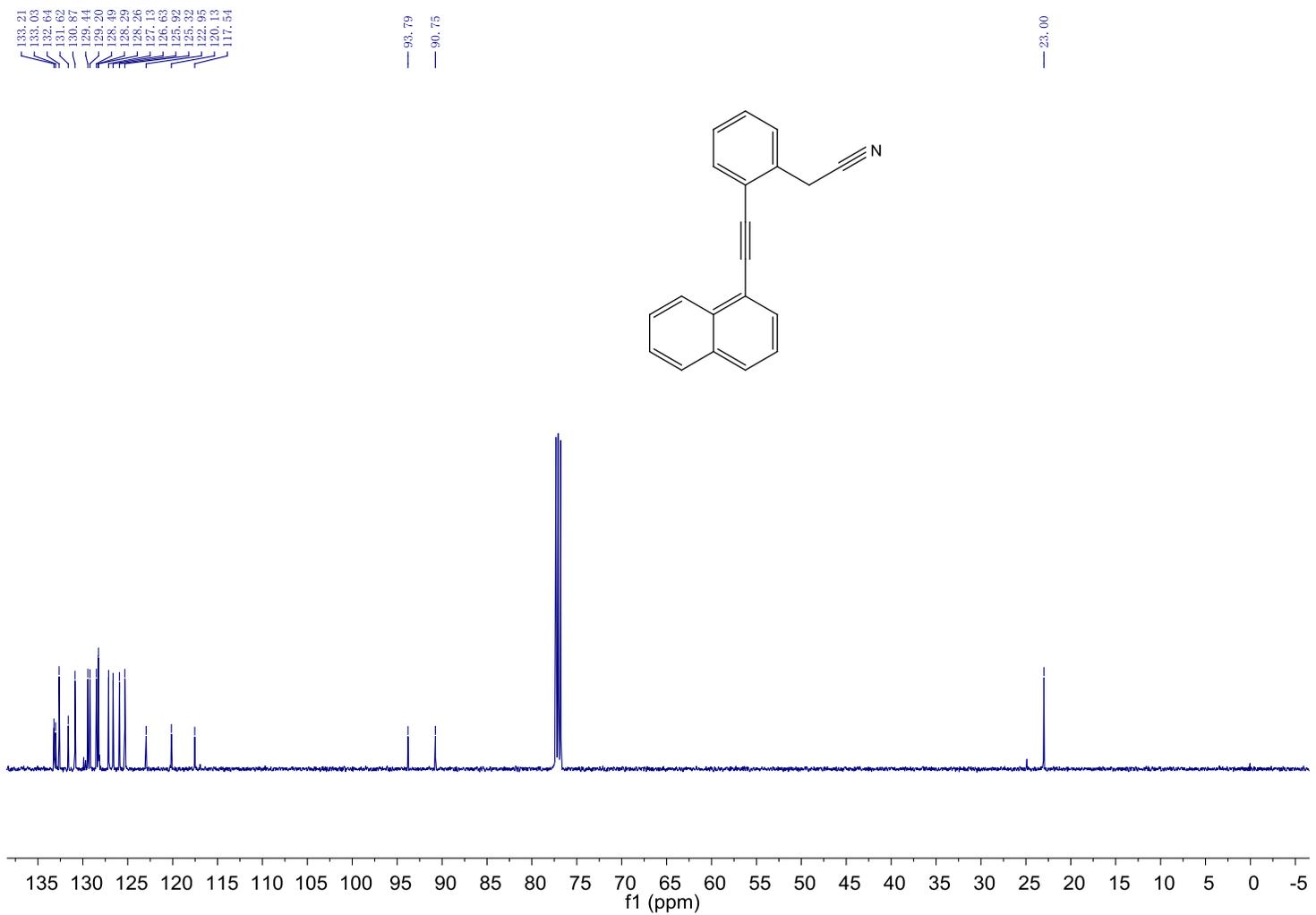
**1r**



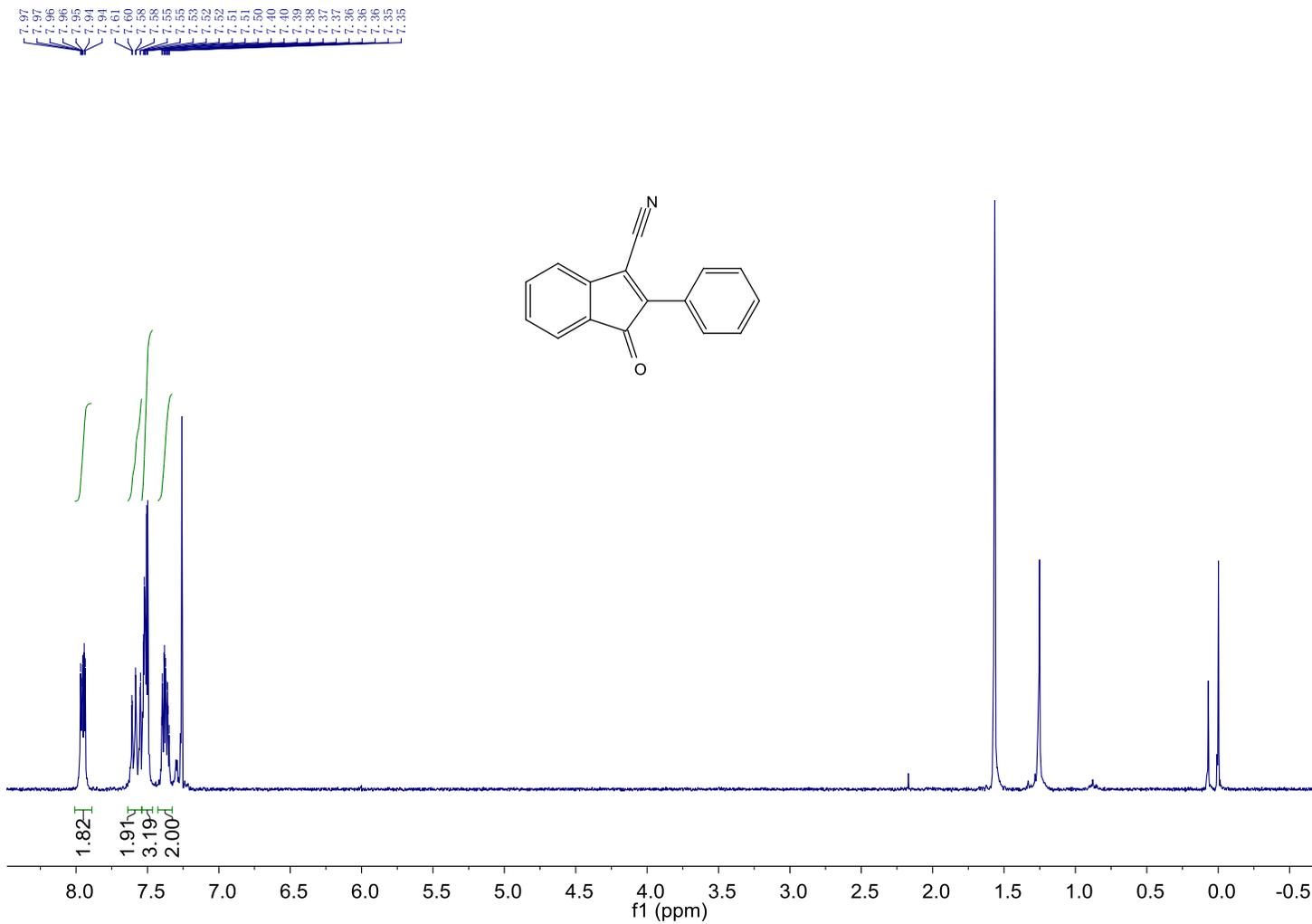


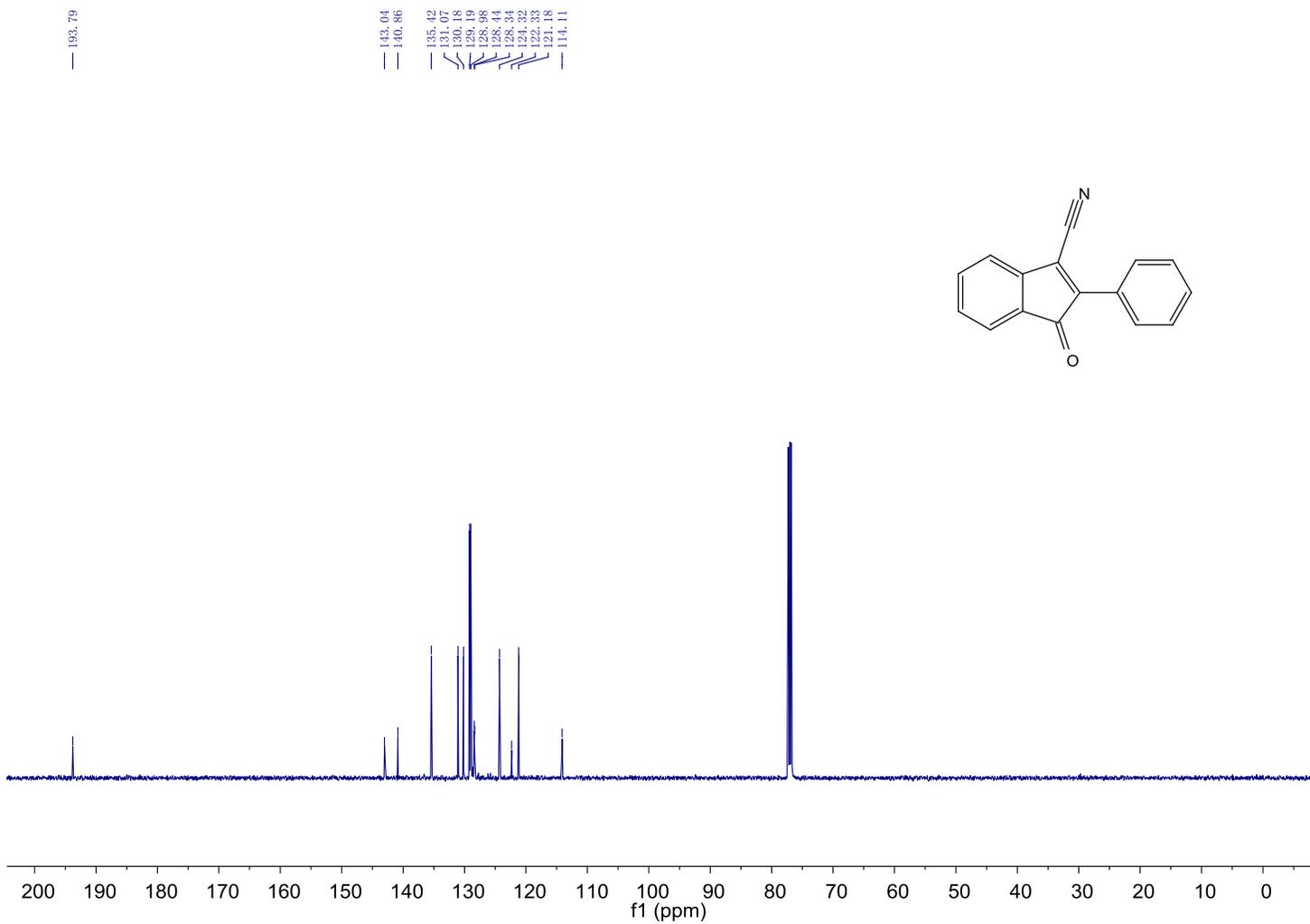
1s



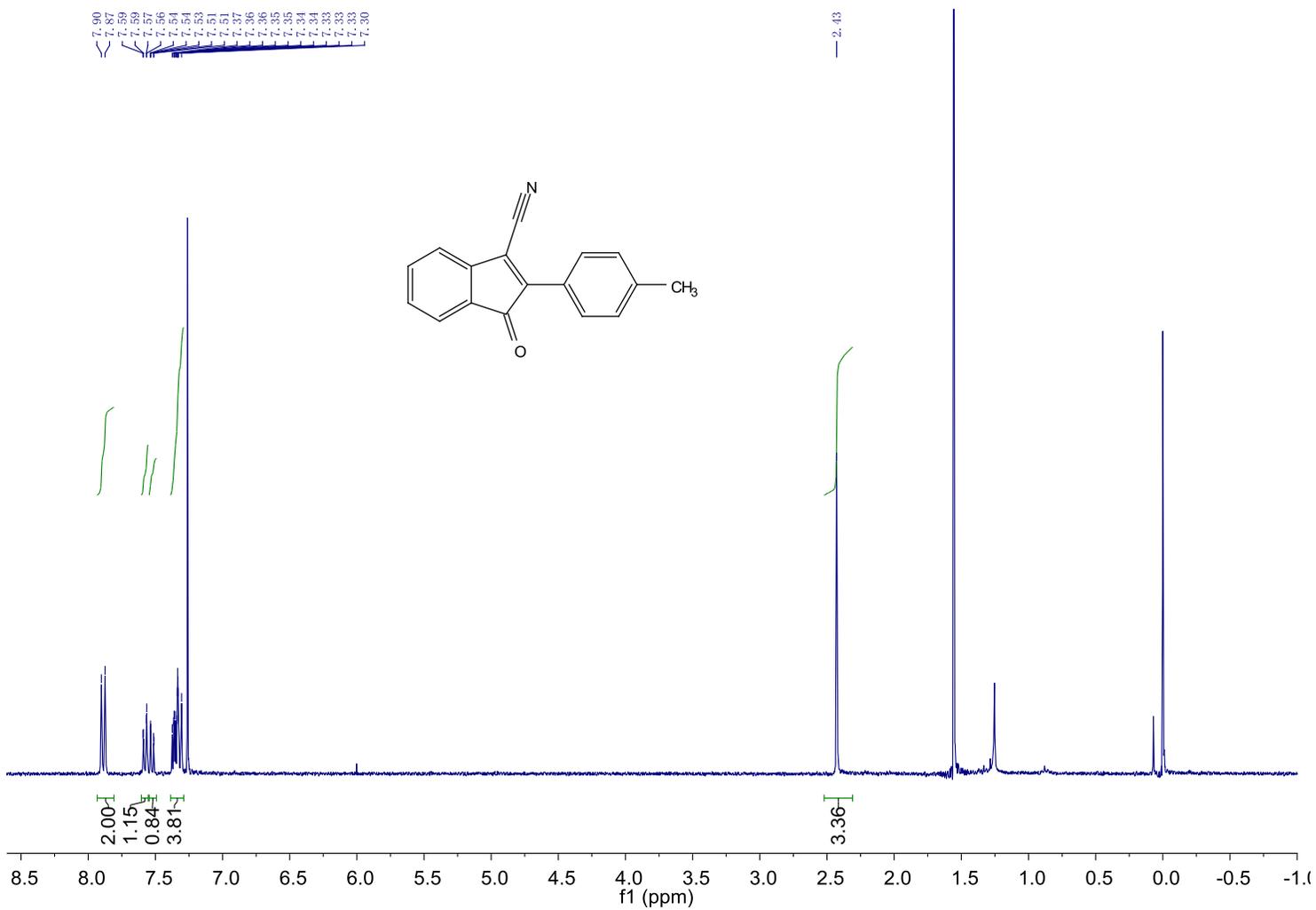


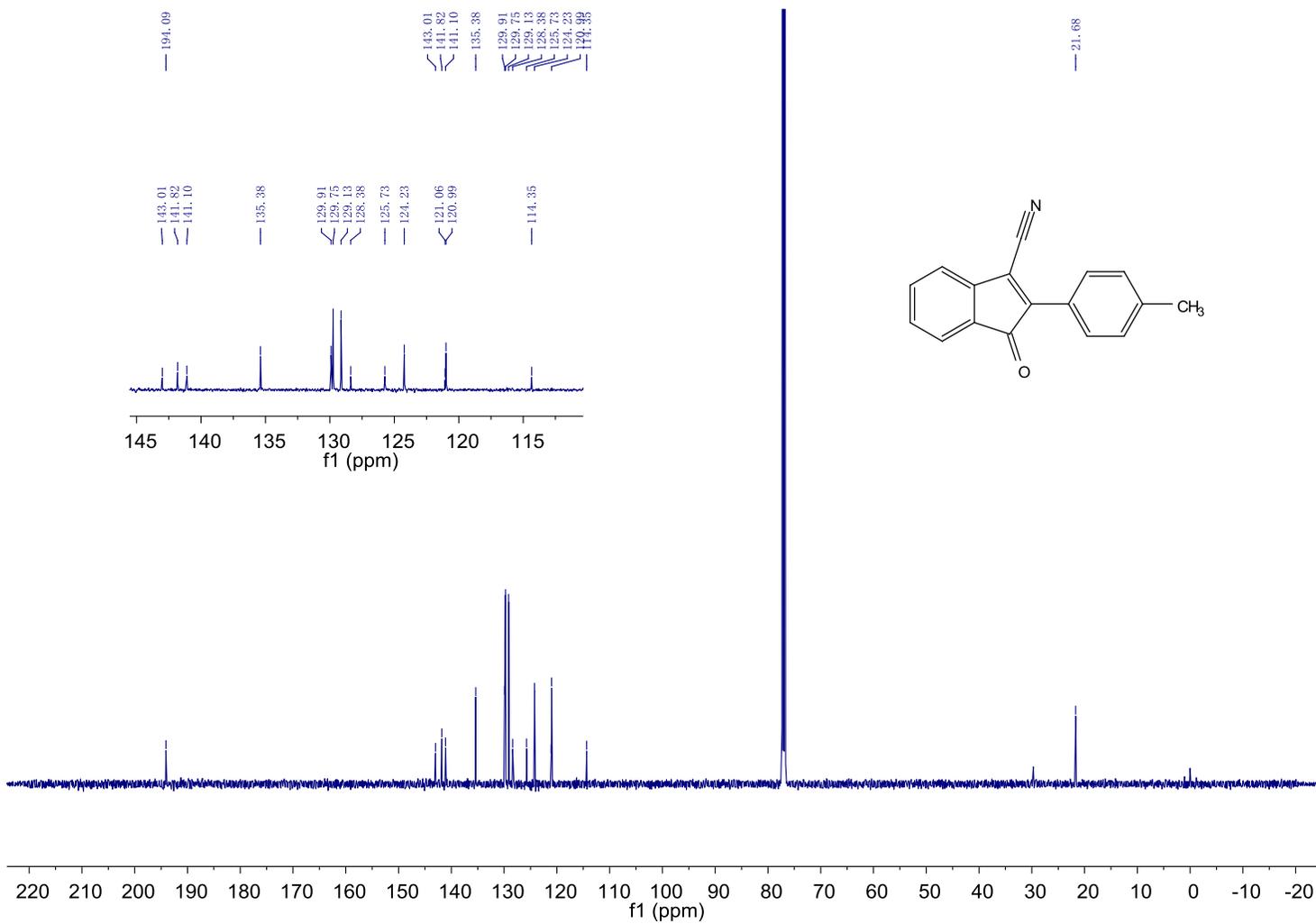
2a



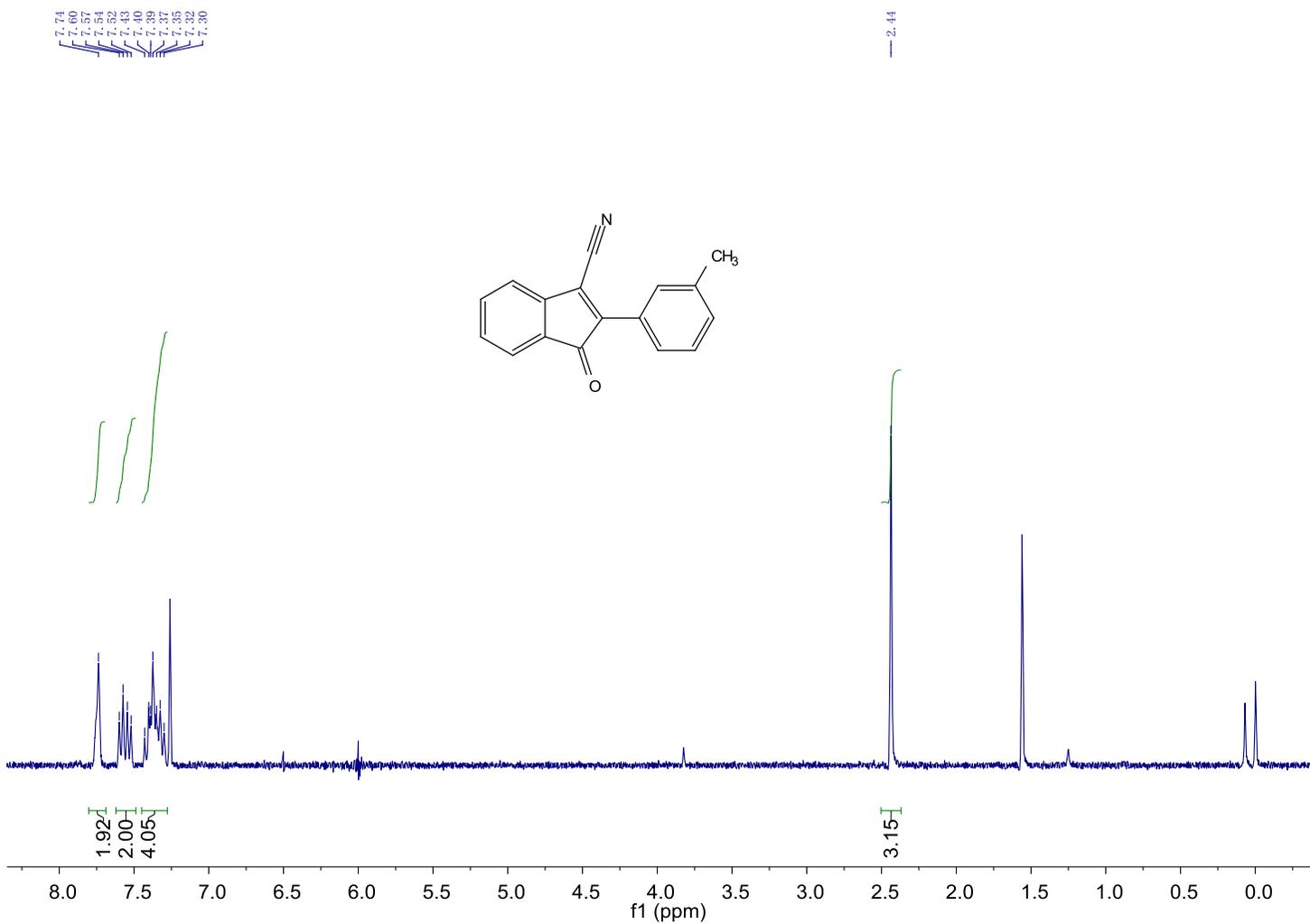


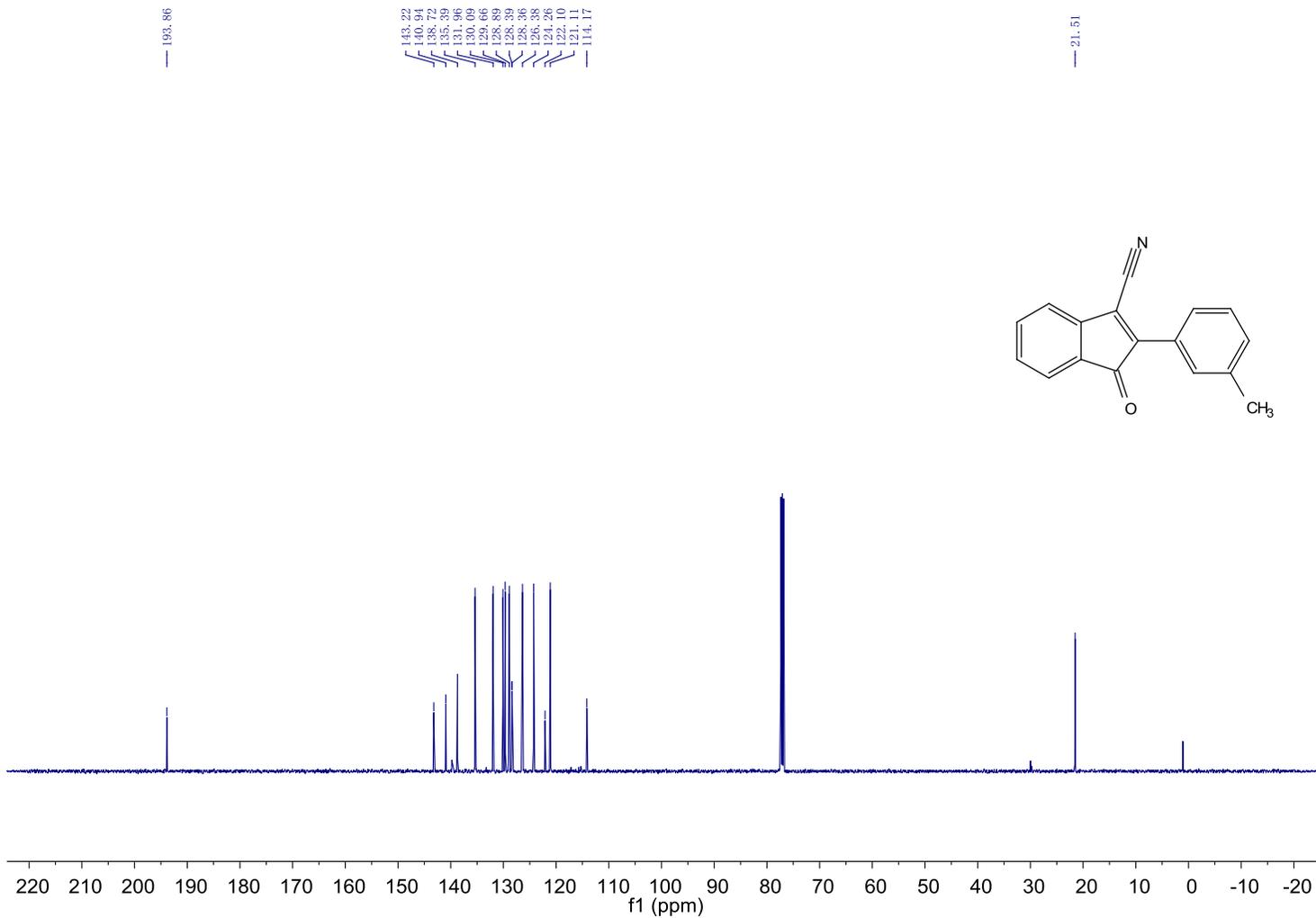
2b



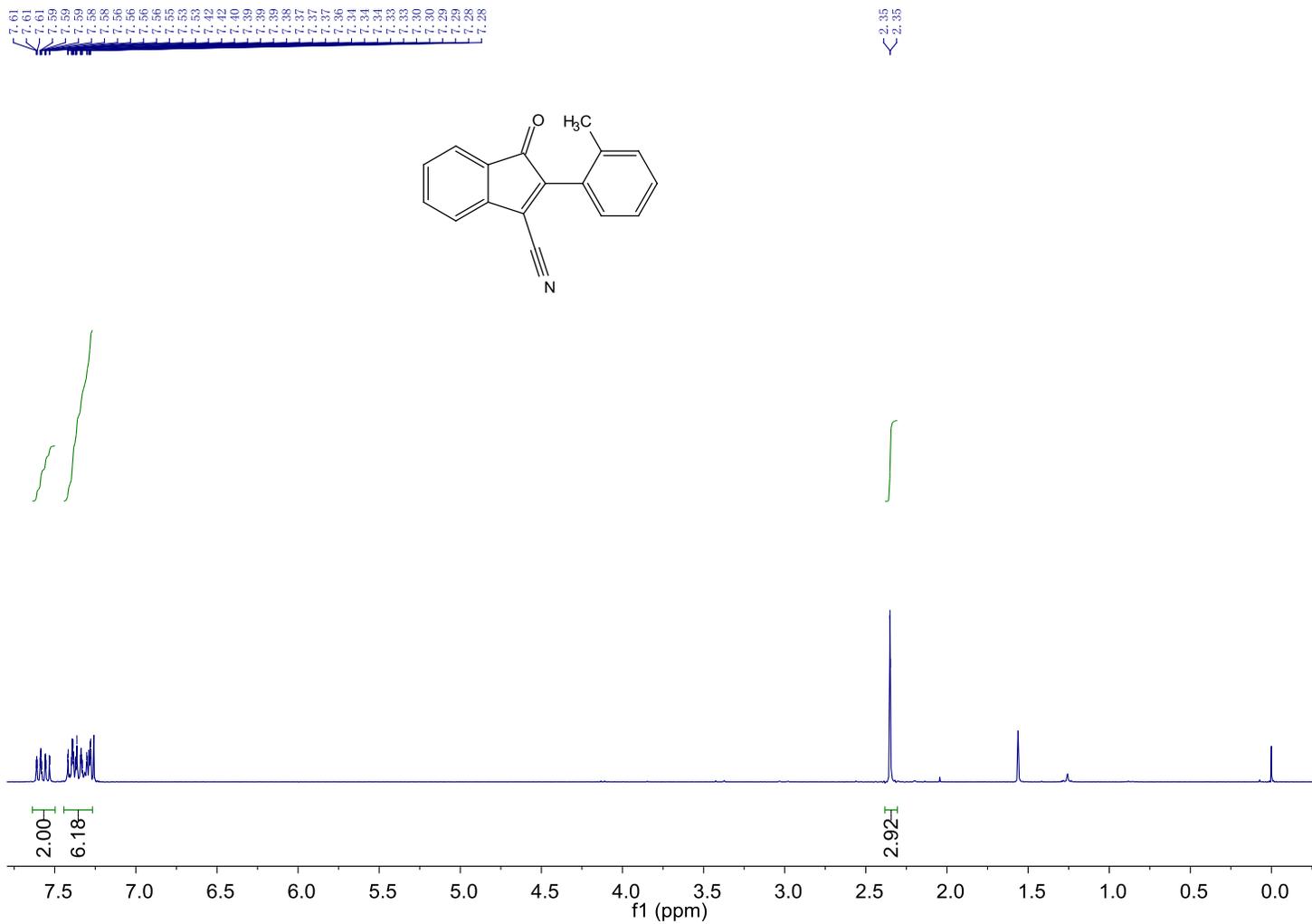


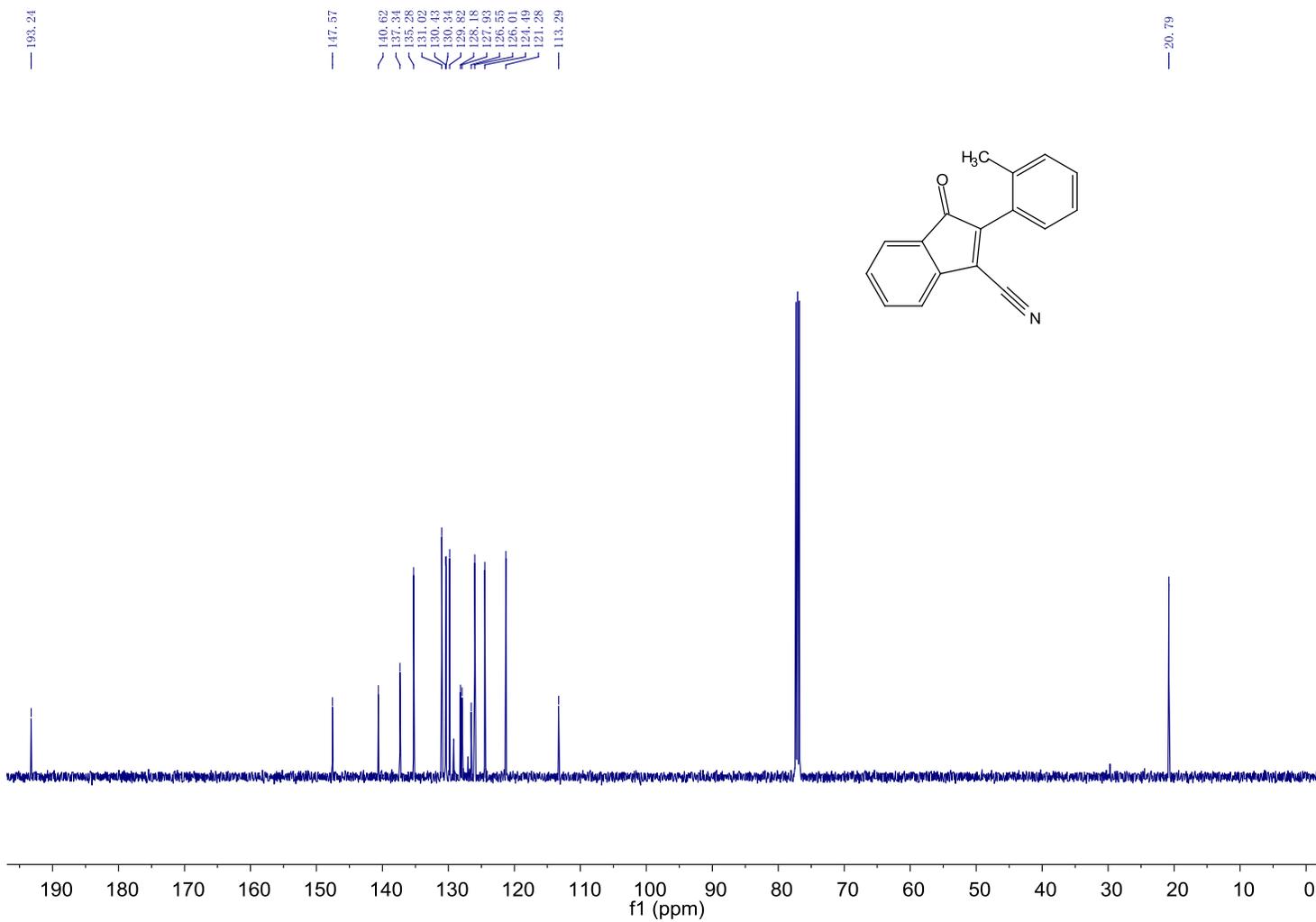
2c



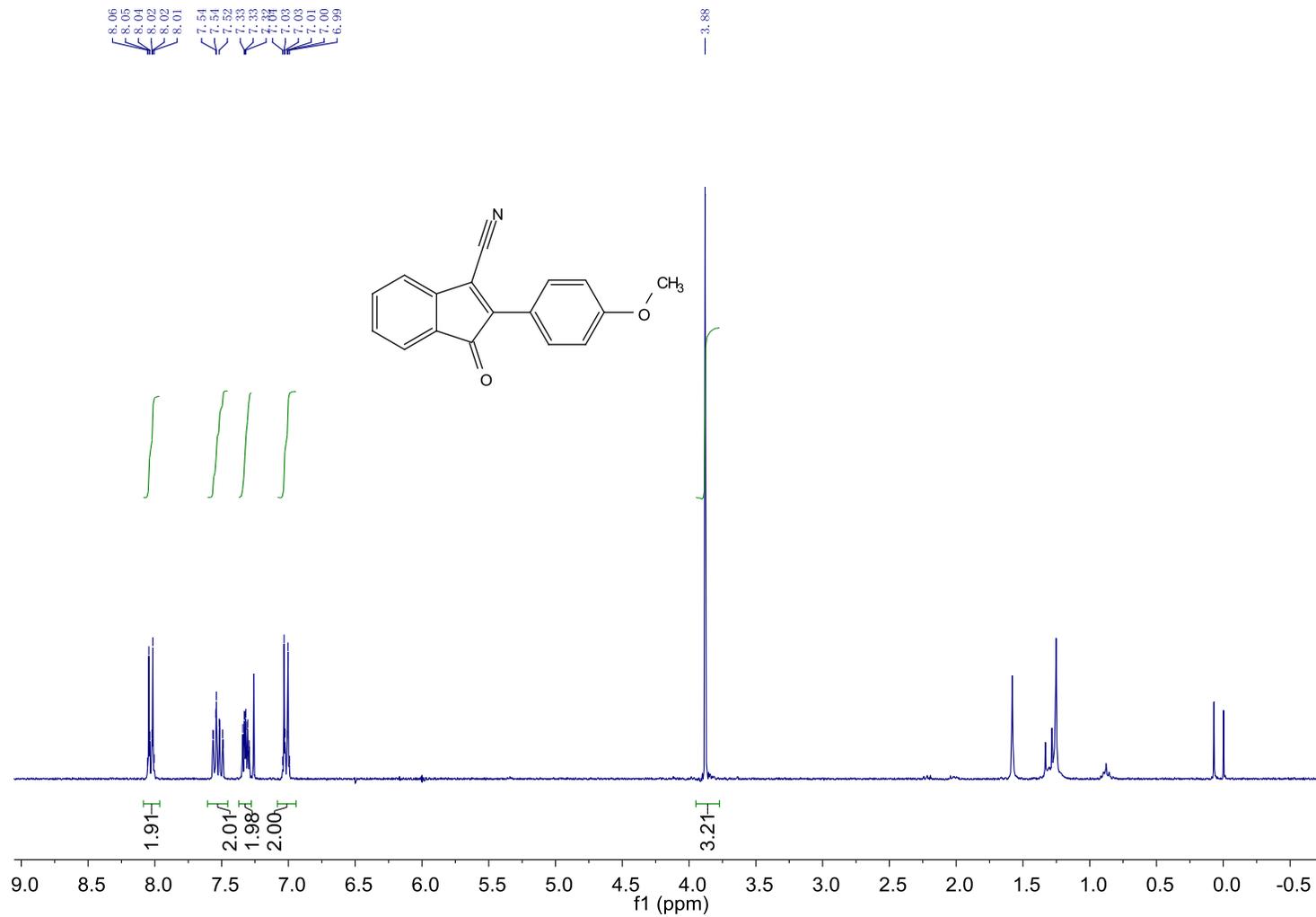


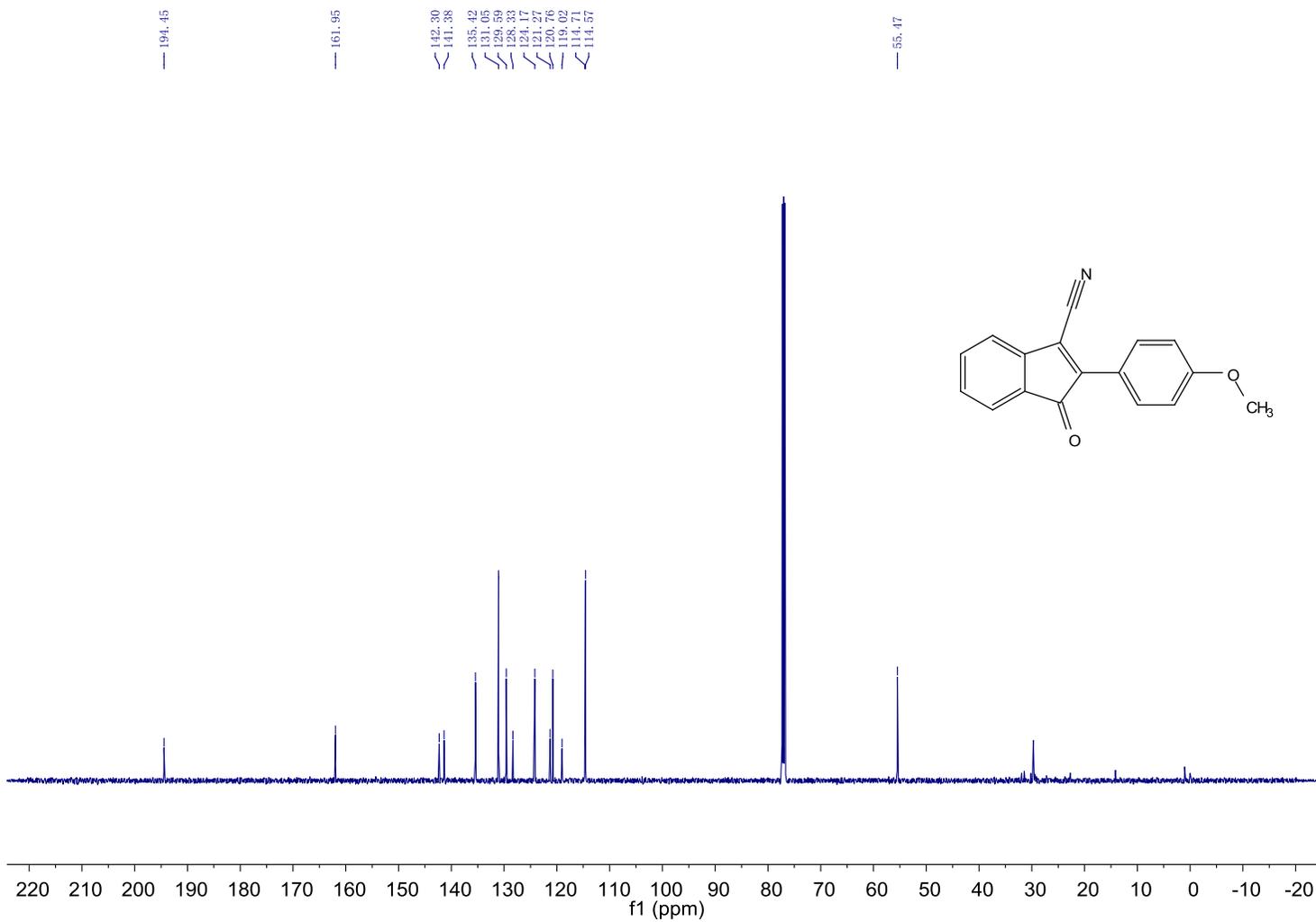
2d



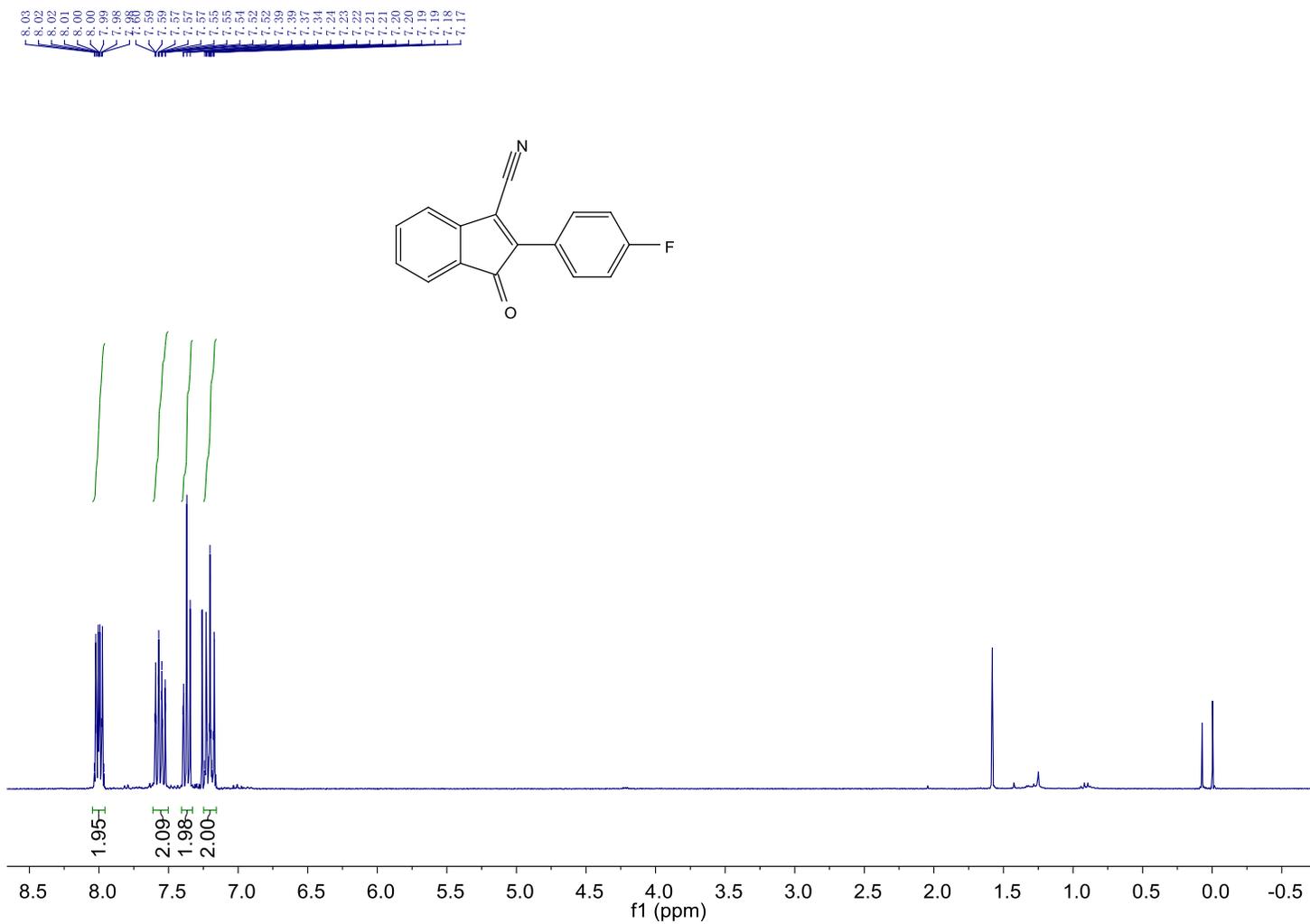


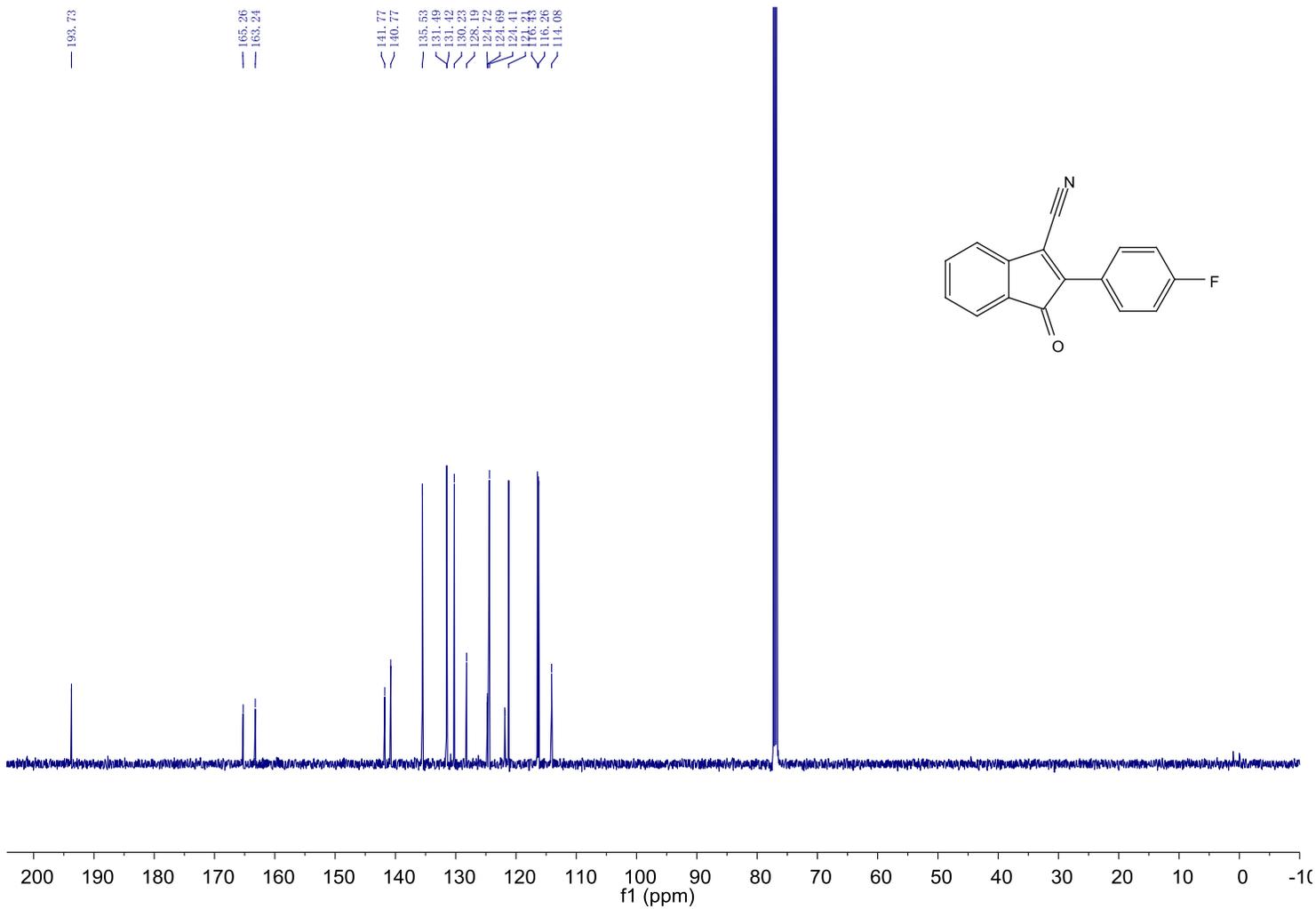
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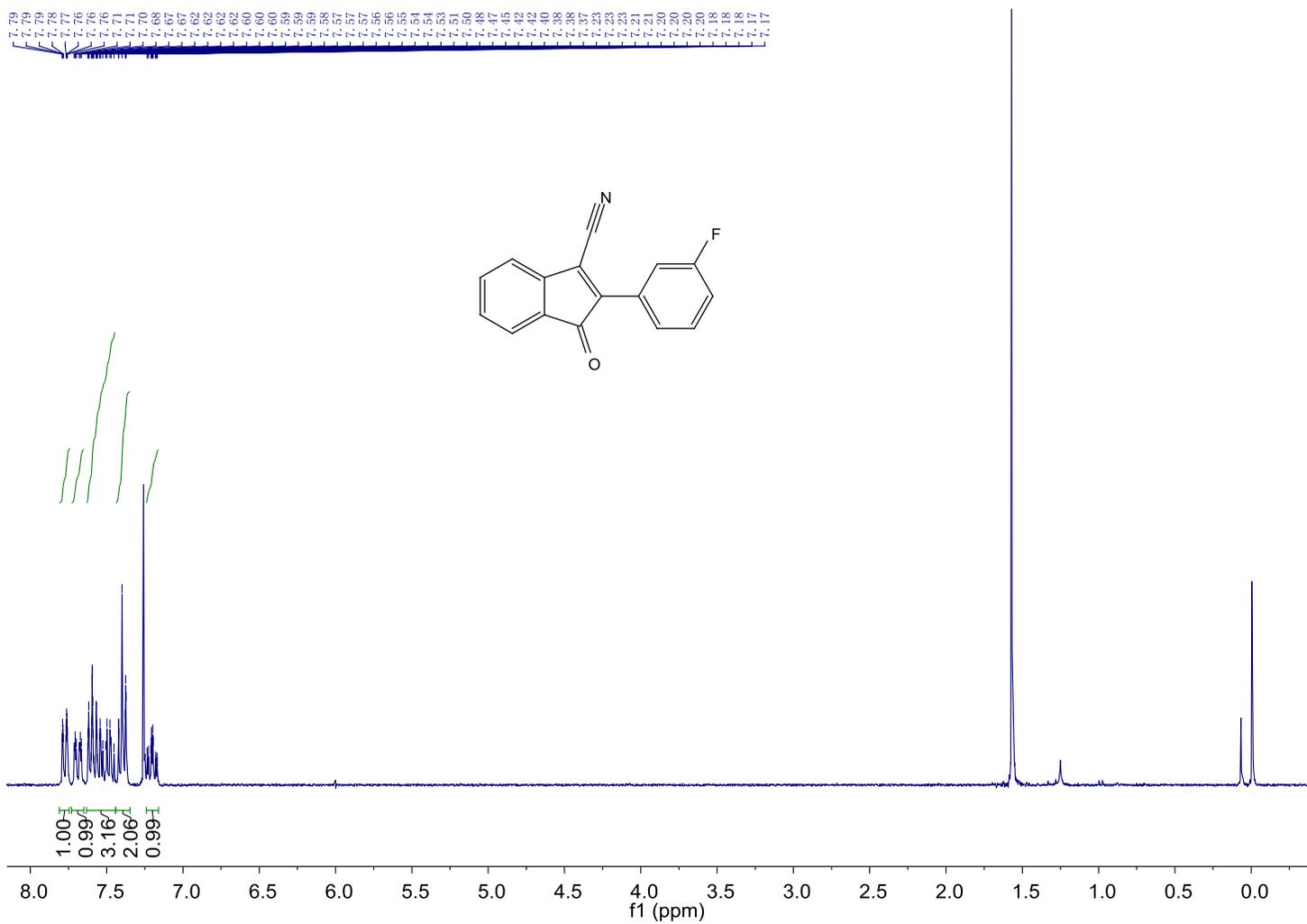


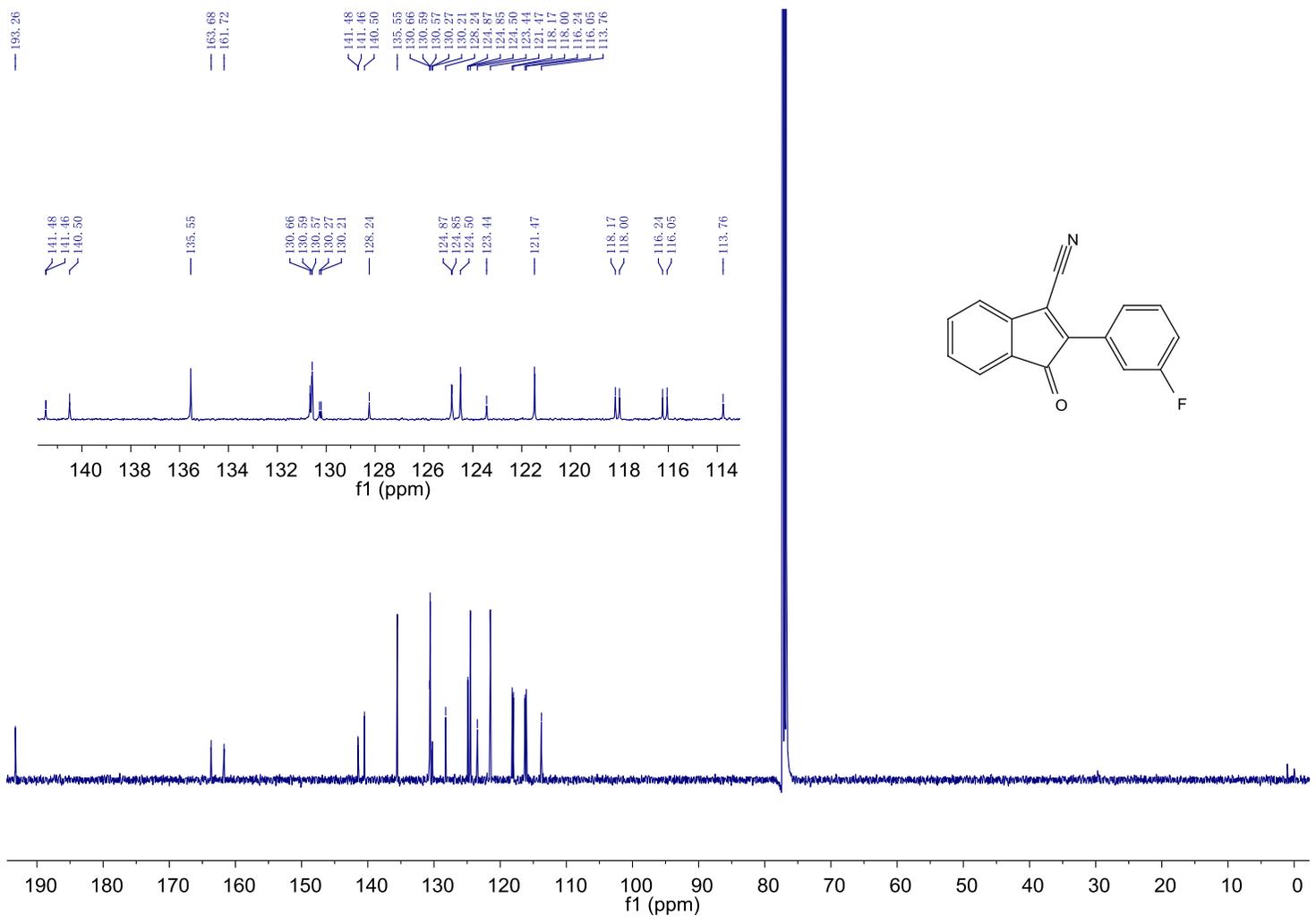
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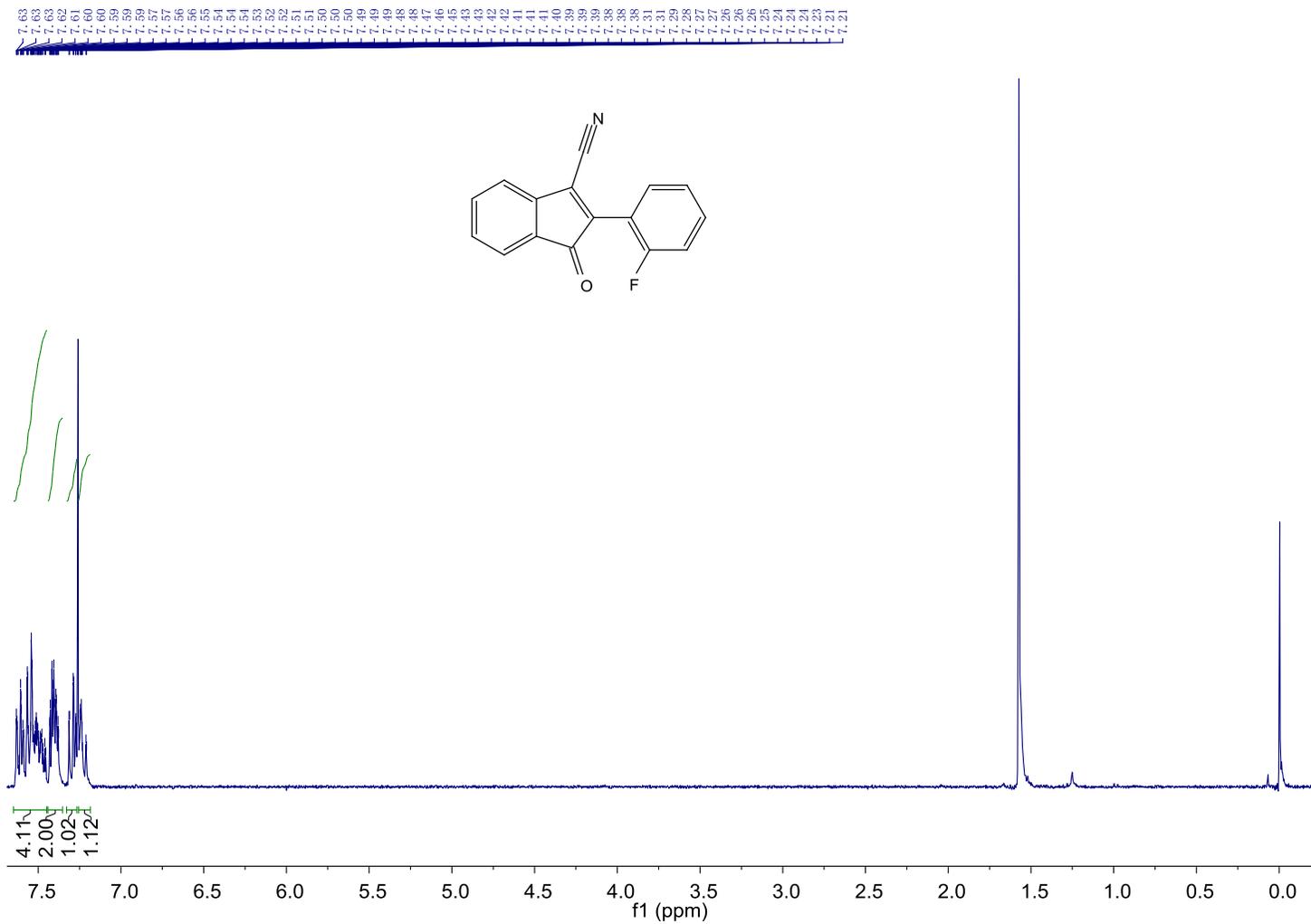


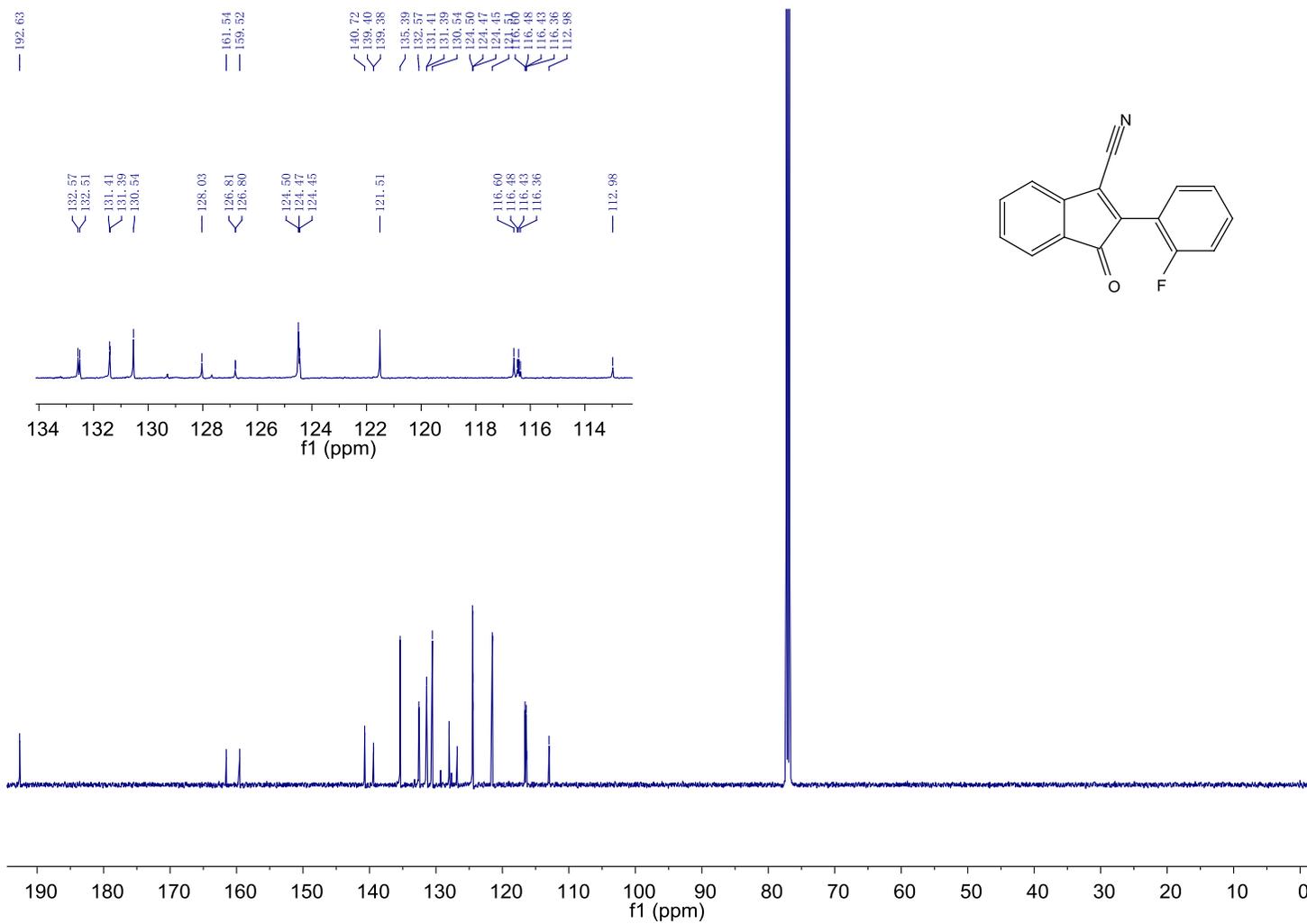
2g



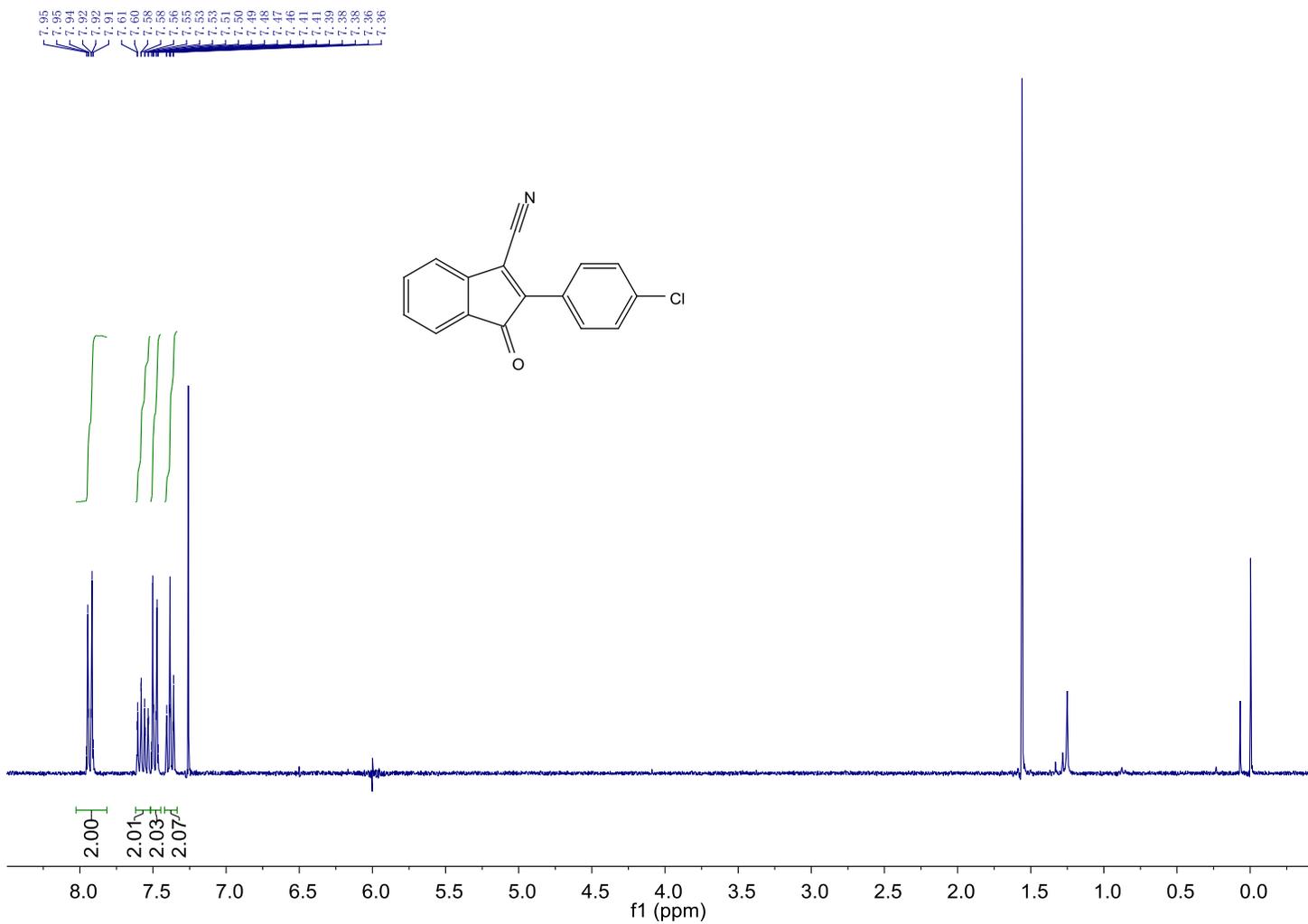


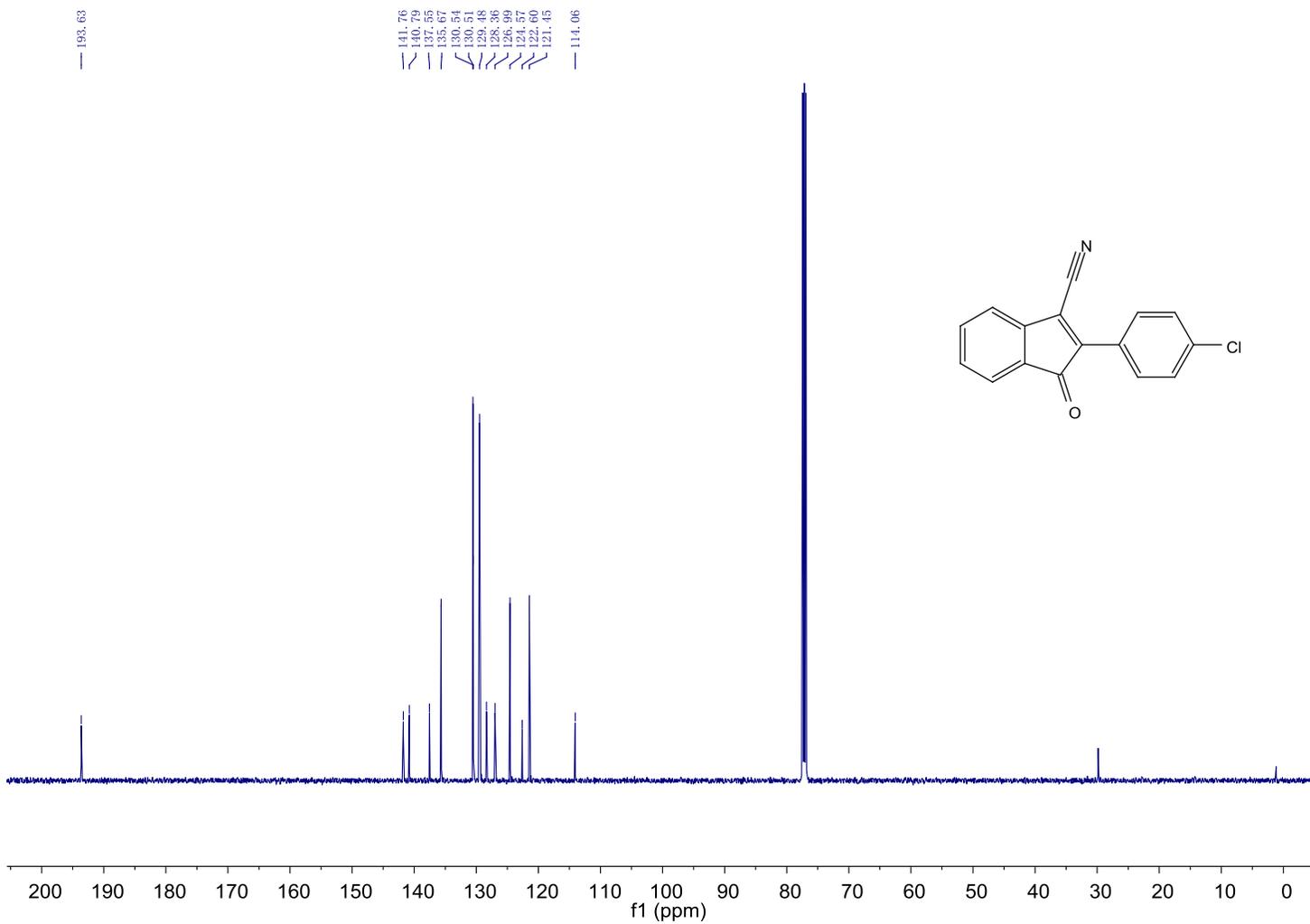
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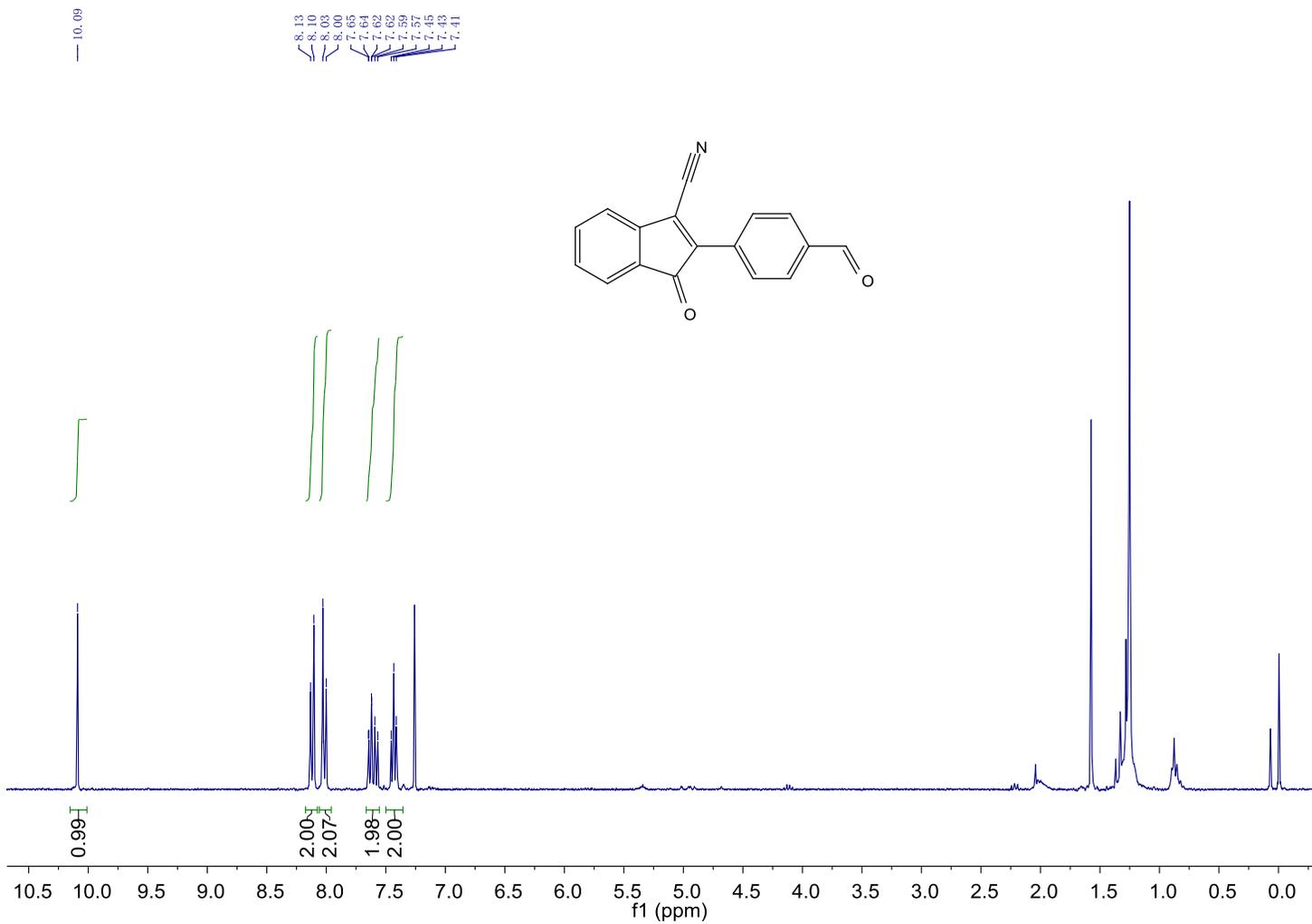


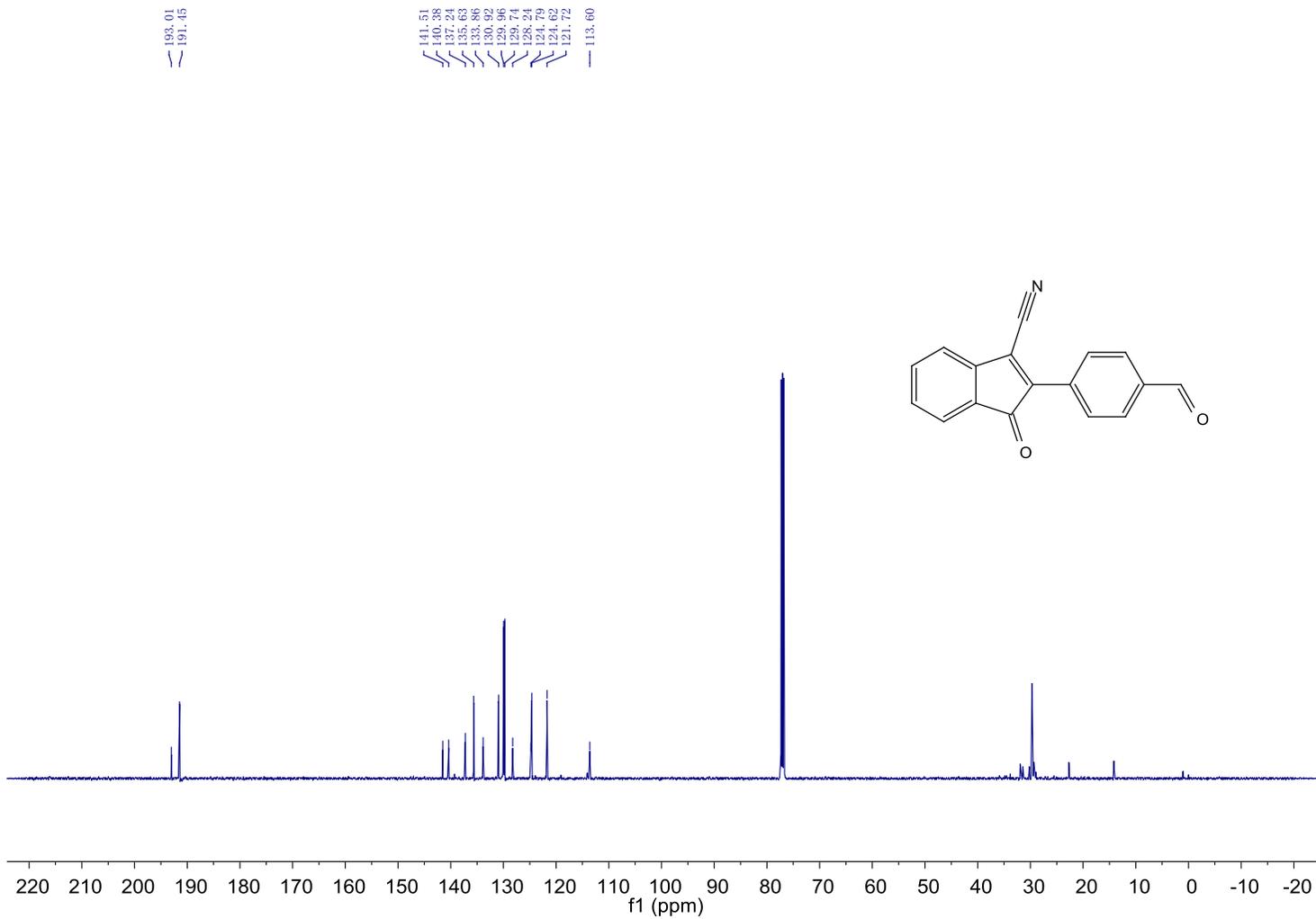
2i



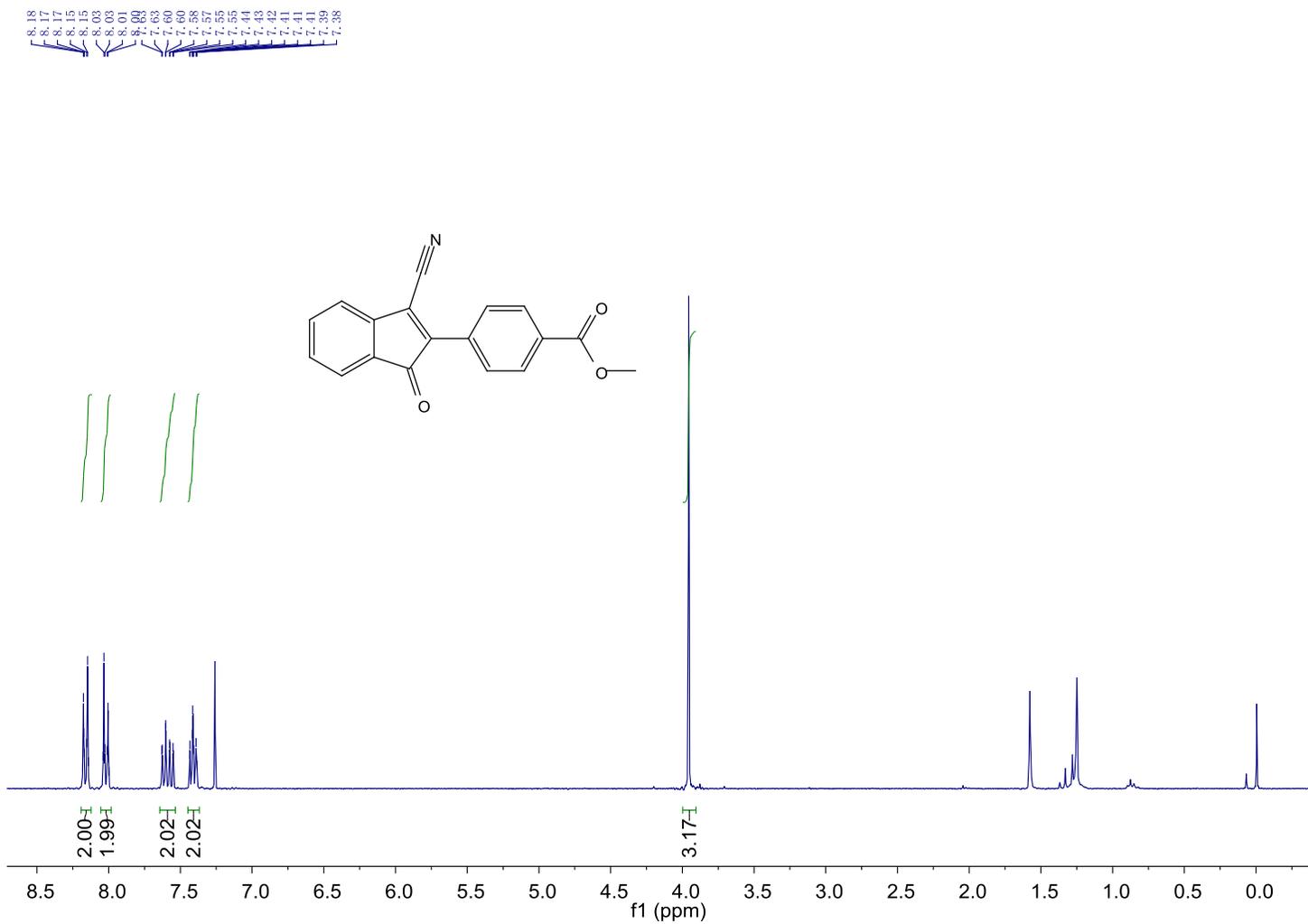


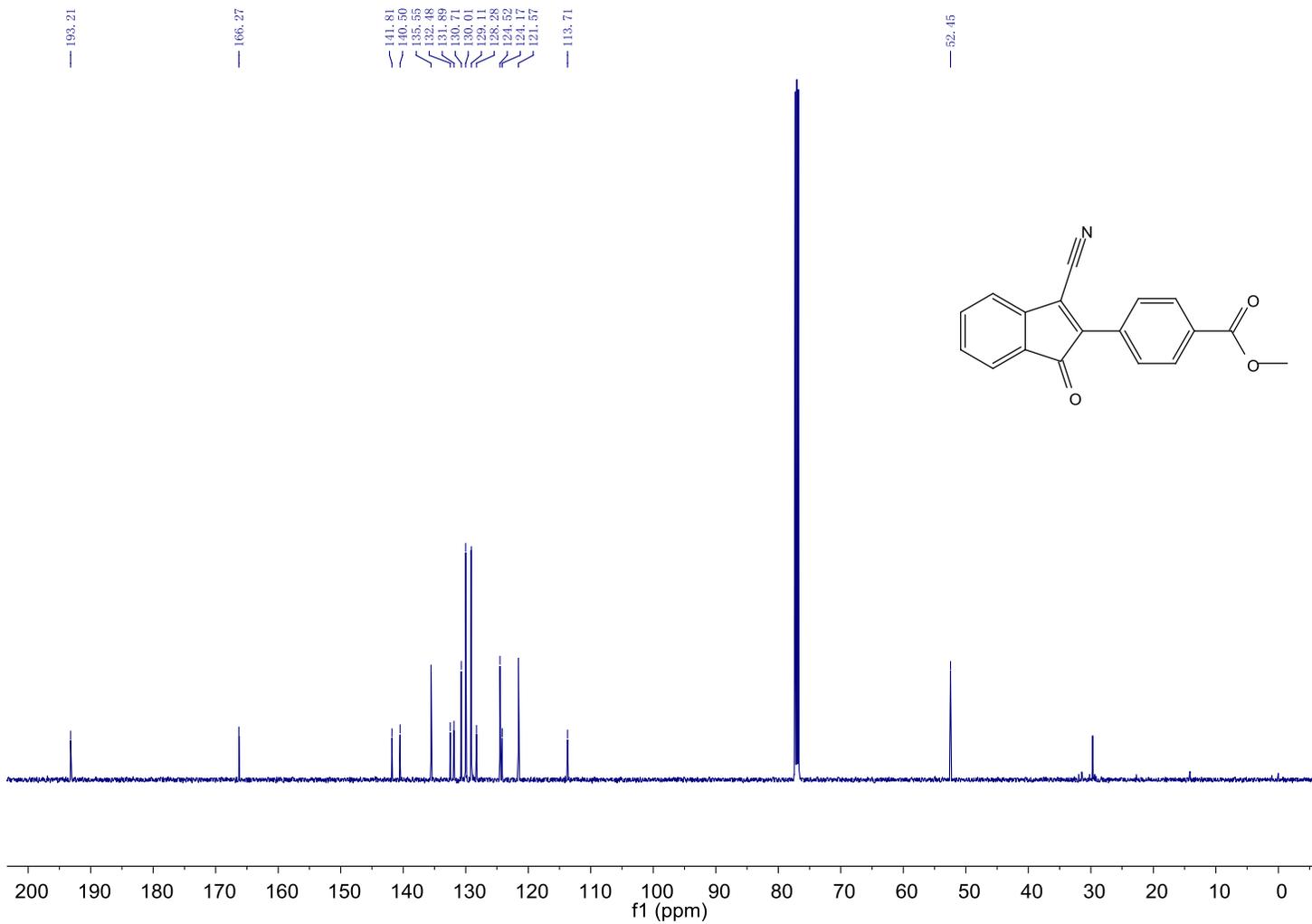
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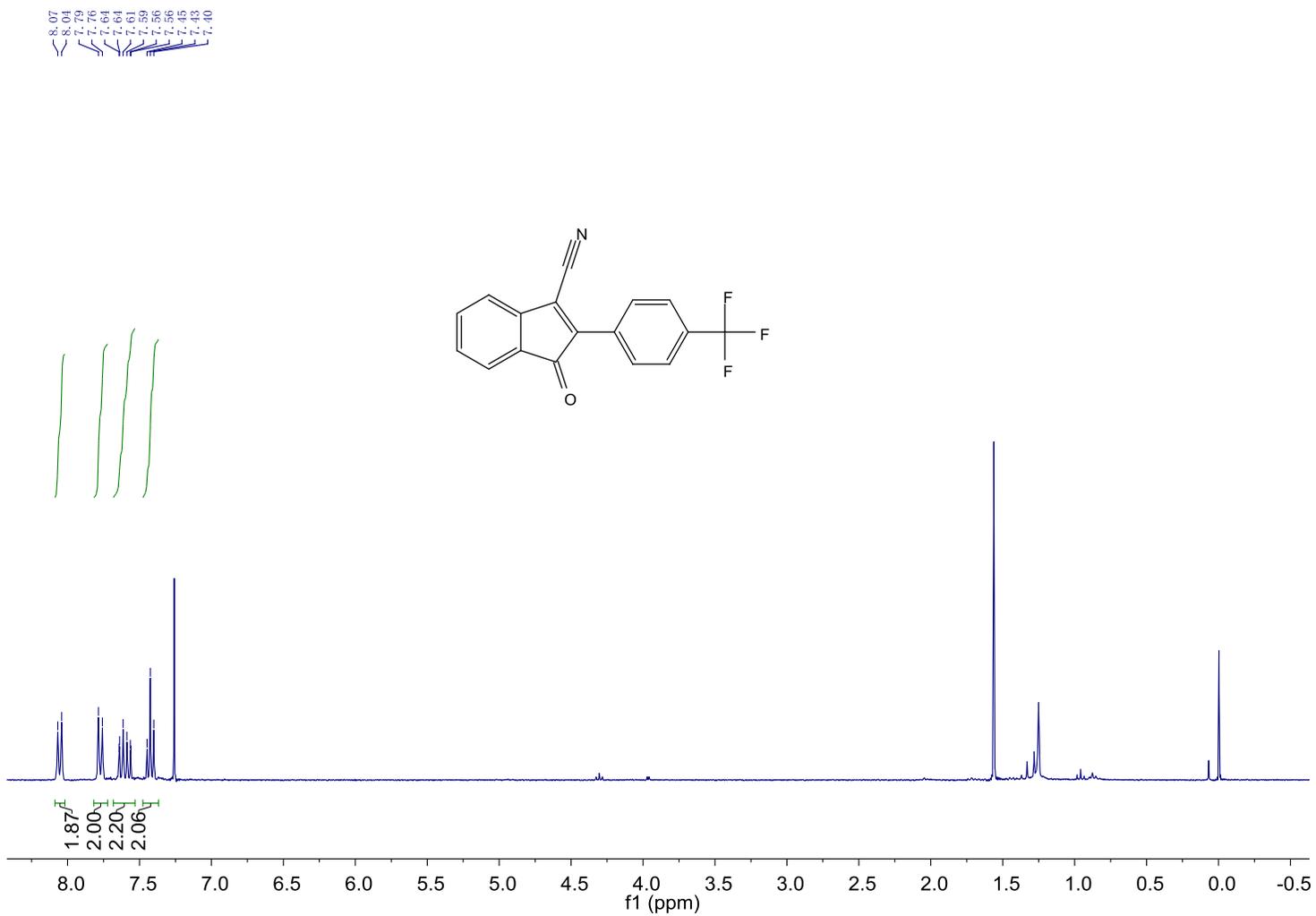


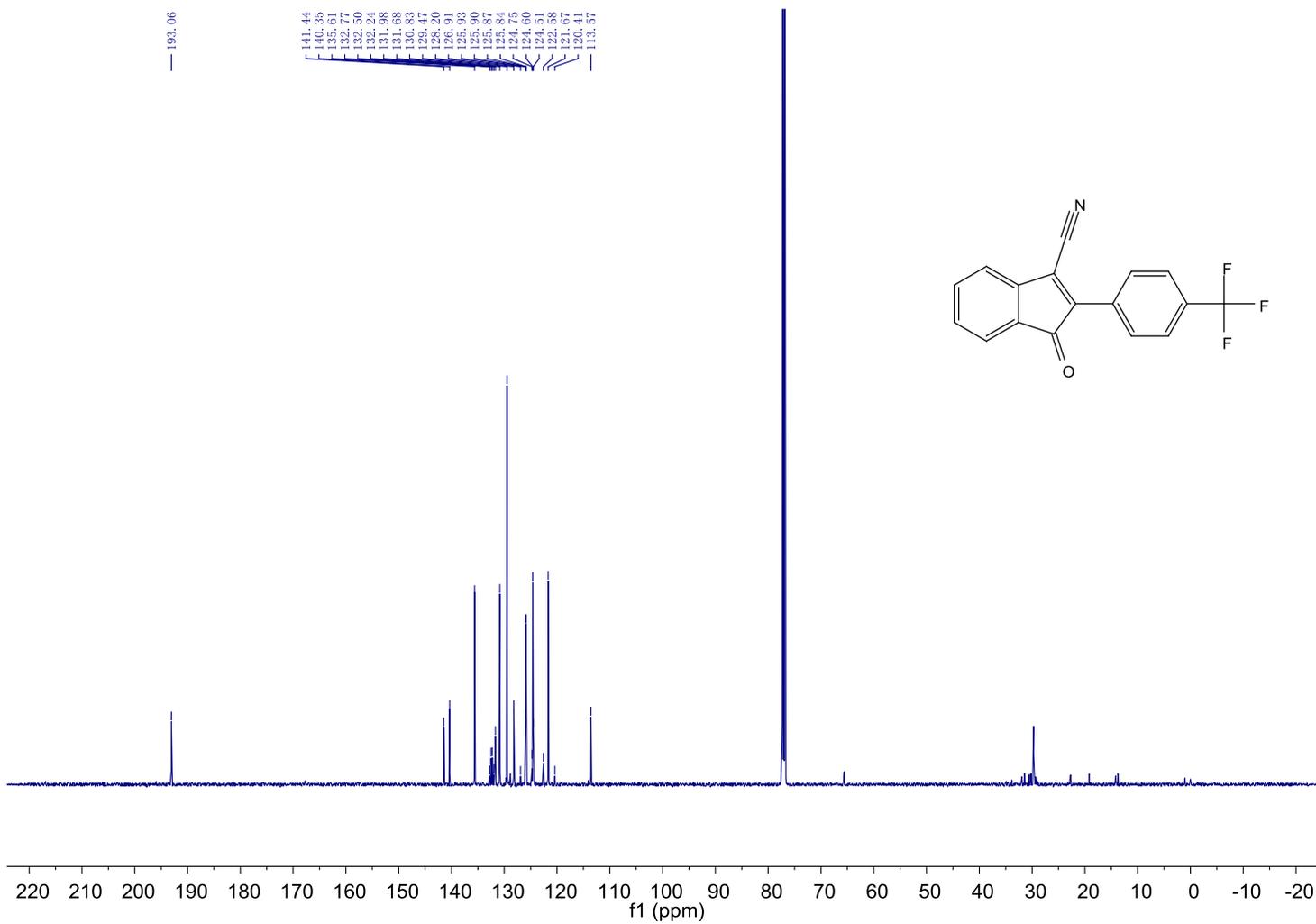
2k





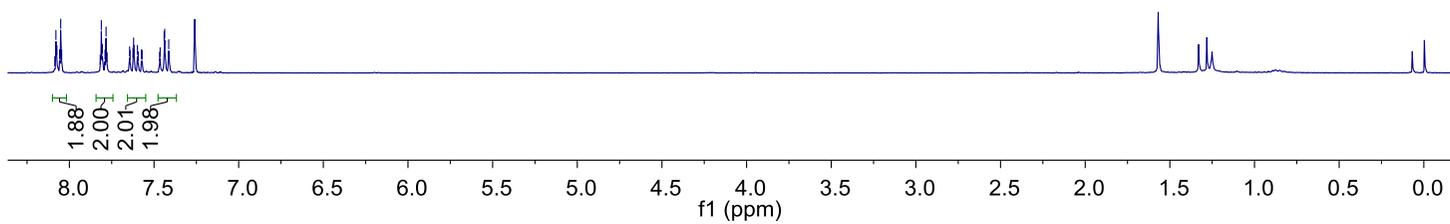
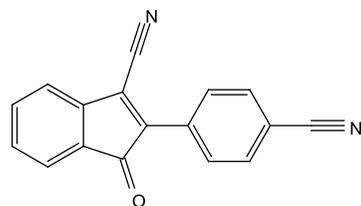
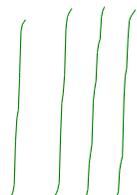
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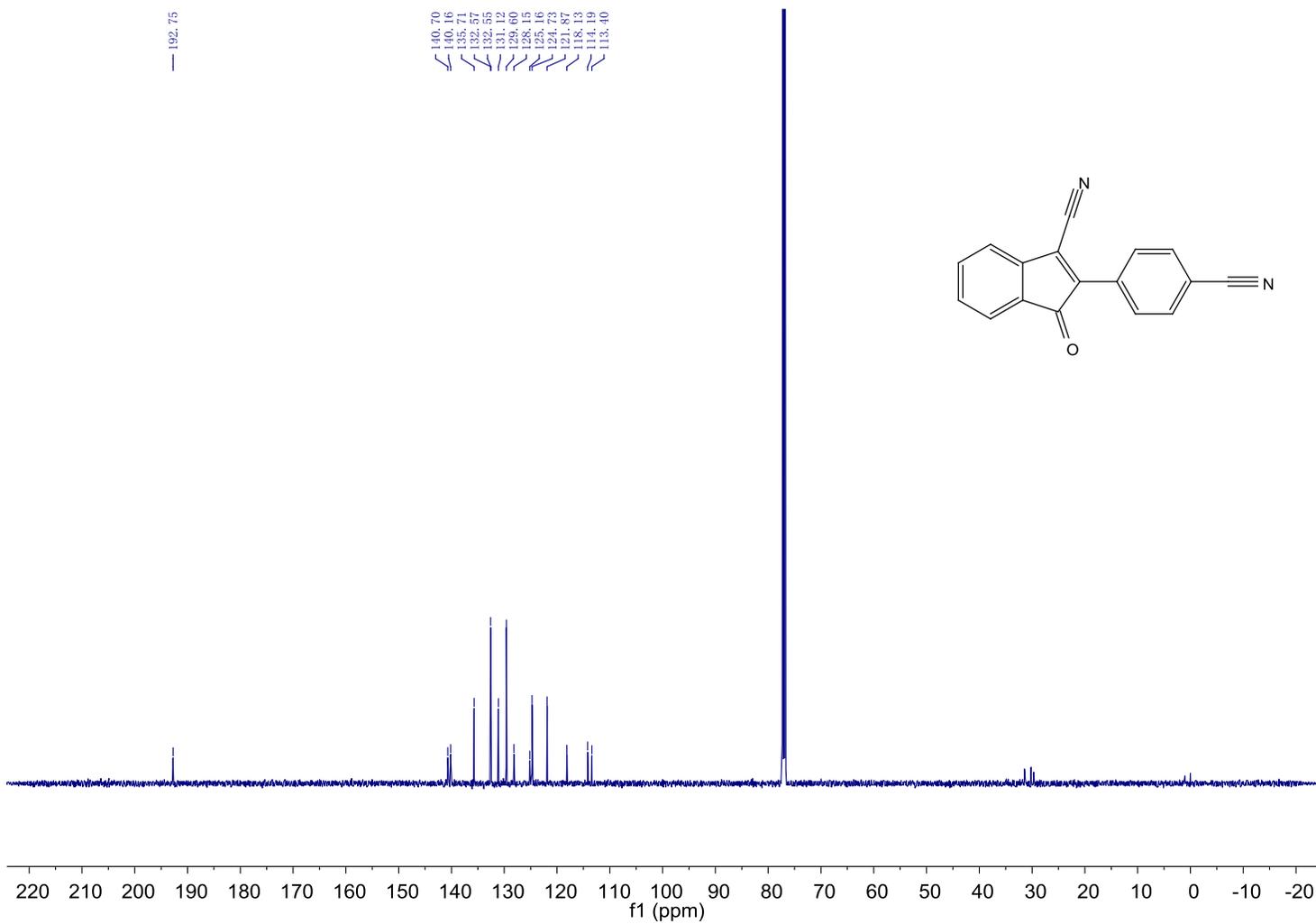




2m

8.08  
8.07  
8.06  
8.05  
8.04  
7.81  
7.81  
7.79  
7.78  
7.61  
7.61  
7.62  
7.62  
7.60  
7.59  
7.57  
7.47  
7.46  
7.44  
7.41

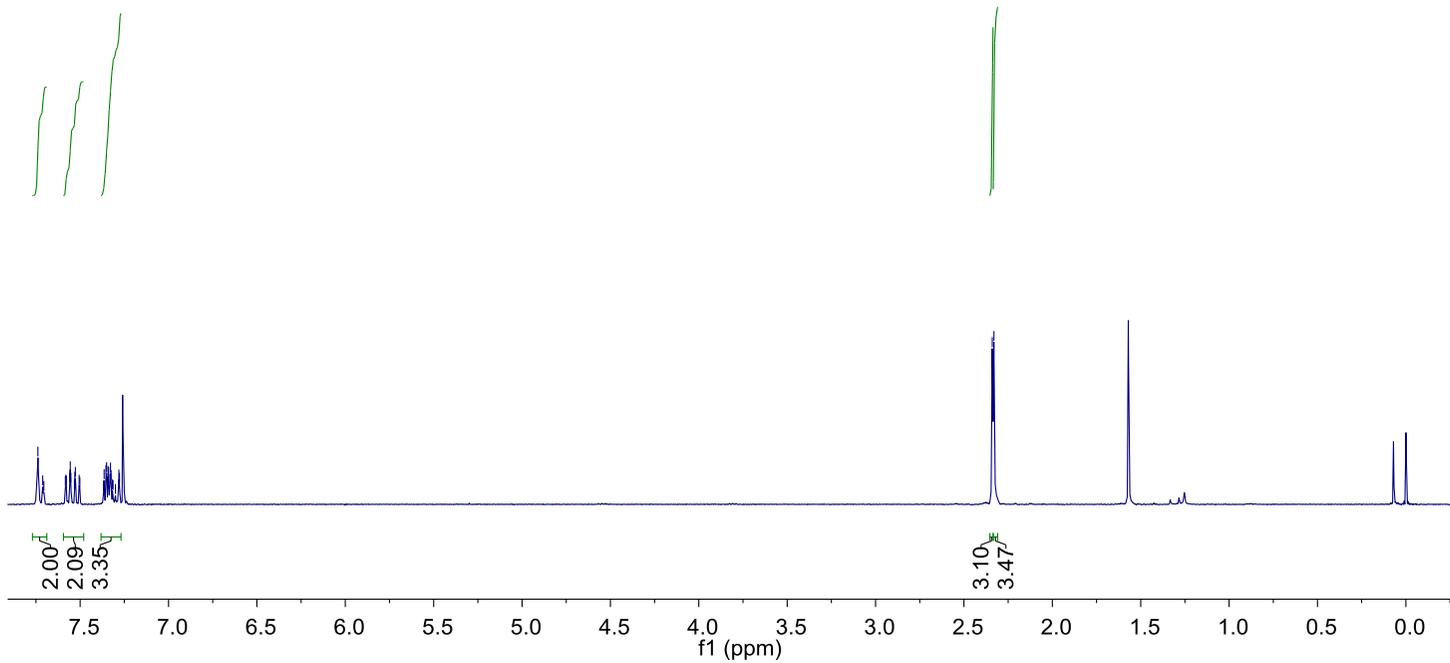
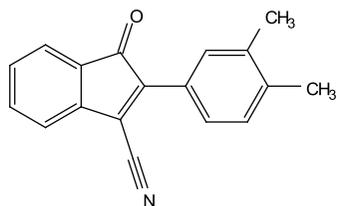


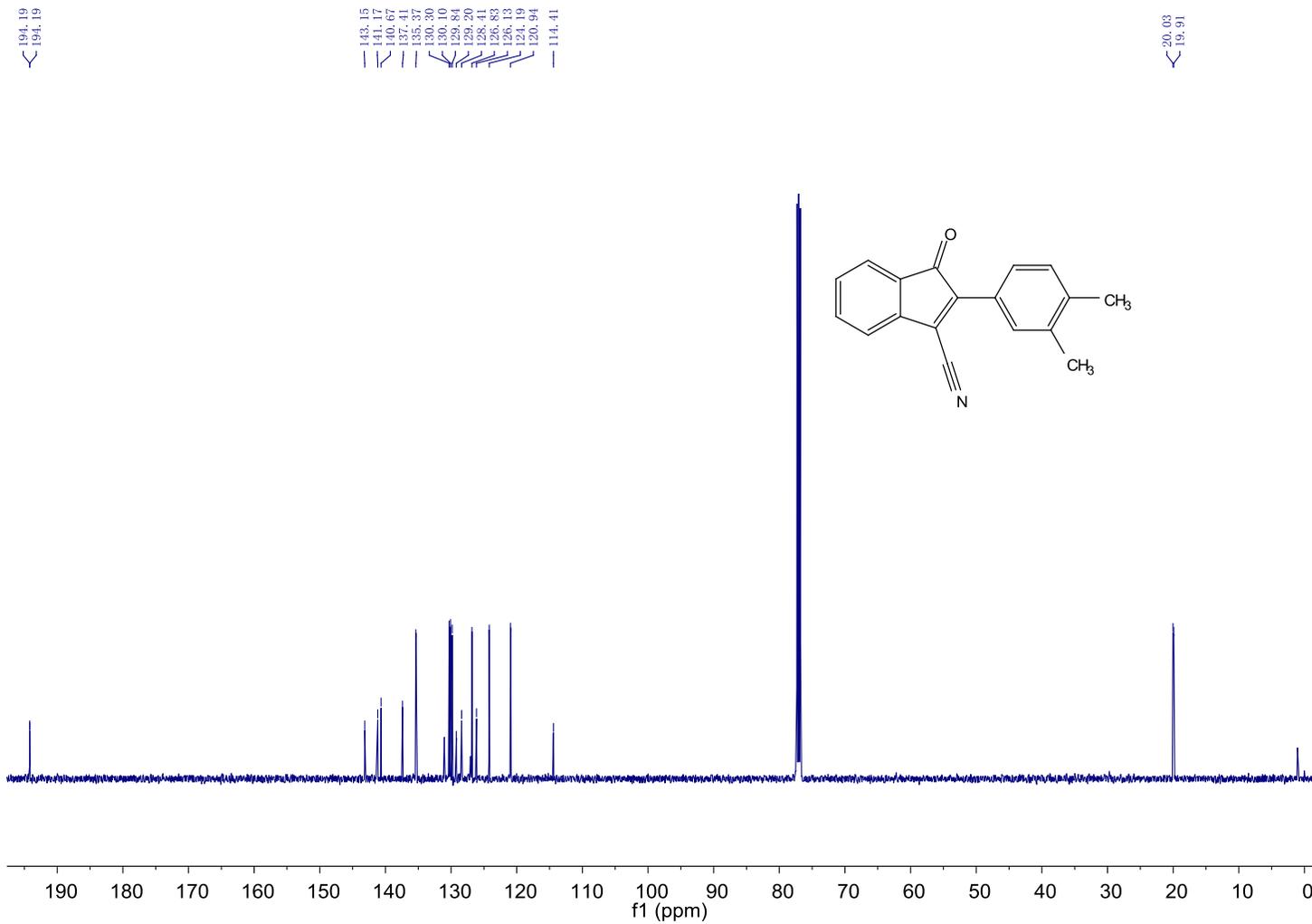


2n

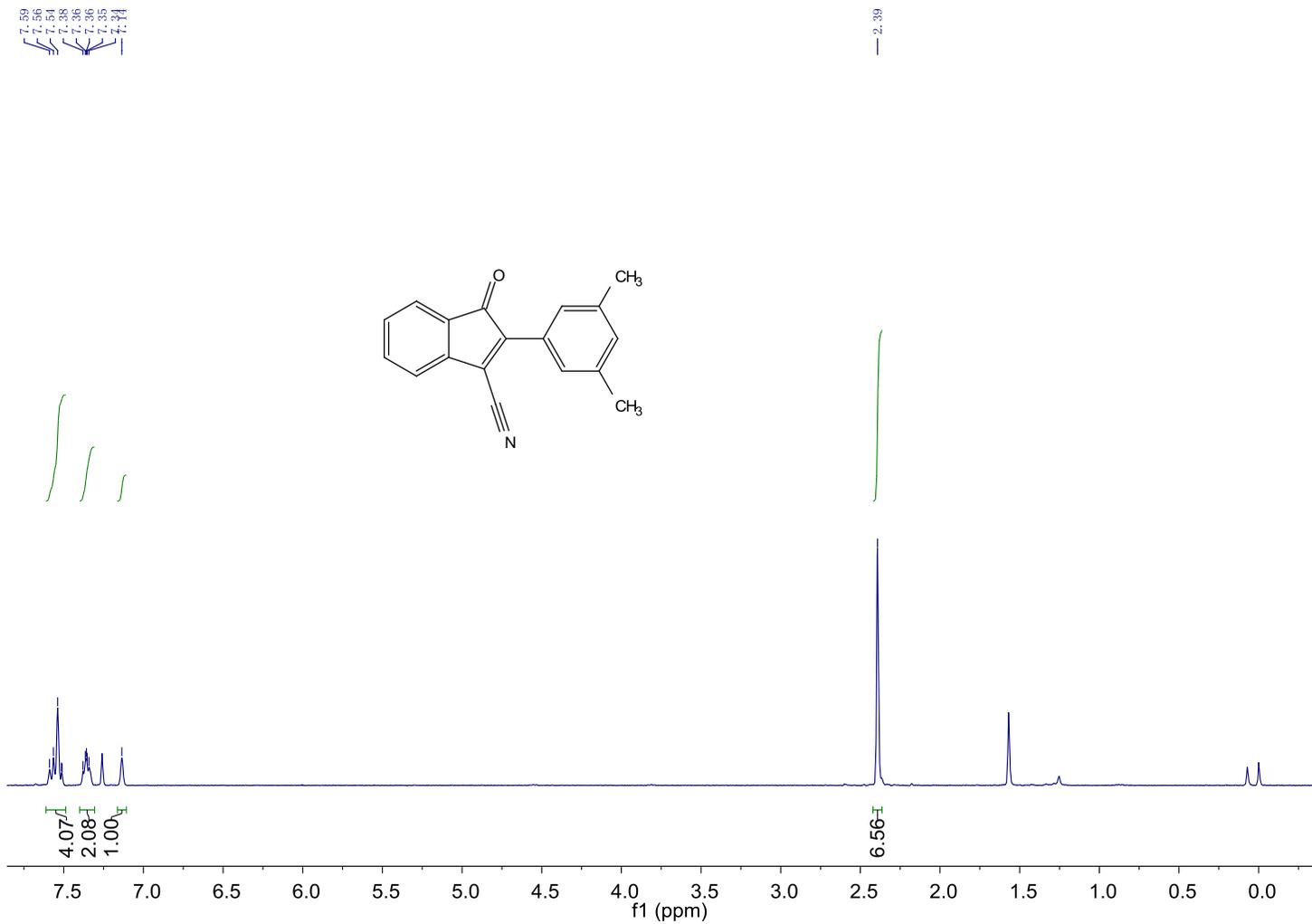
7.74  
7.71  
7.68  
7.58  
7.56  
7.55  
7.53  
7.53  
7.51  
7.50  
7.37  
7.36  
7.35  
7.34  
7.34  
7.33  
7.33  
7.32  
7.31  
7.30  
7.28  
7.28

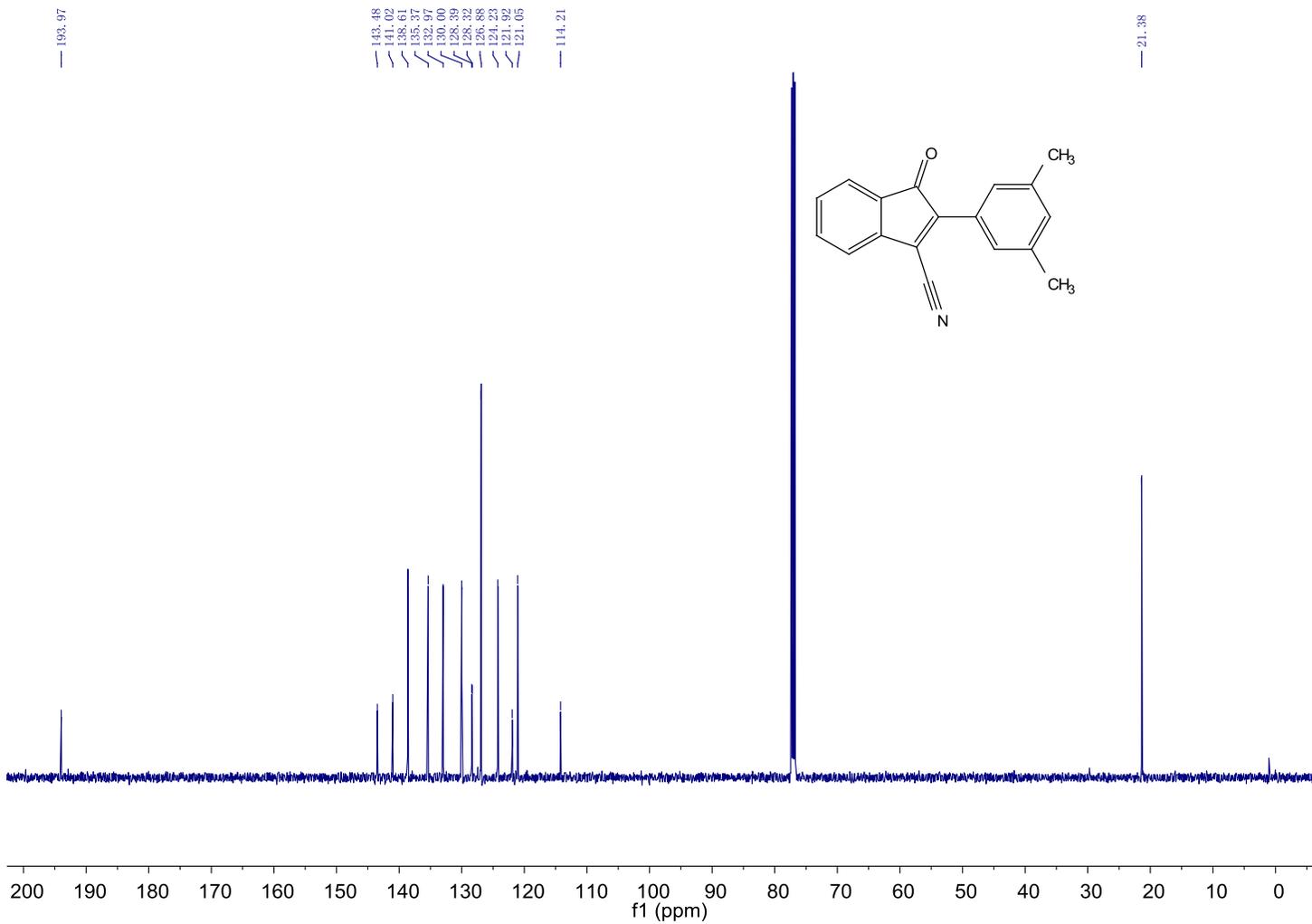
2.34  
2.33



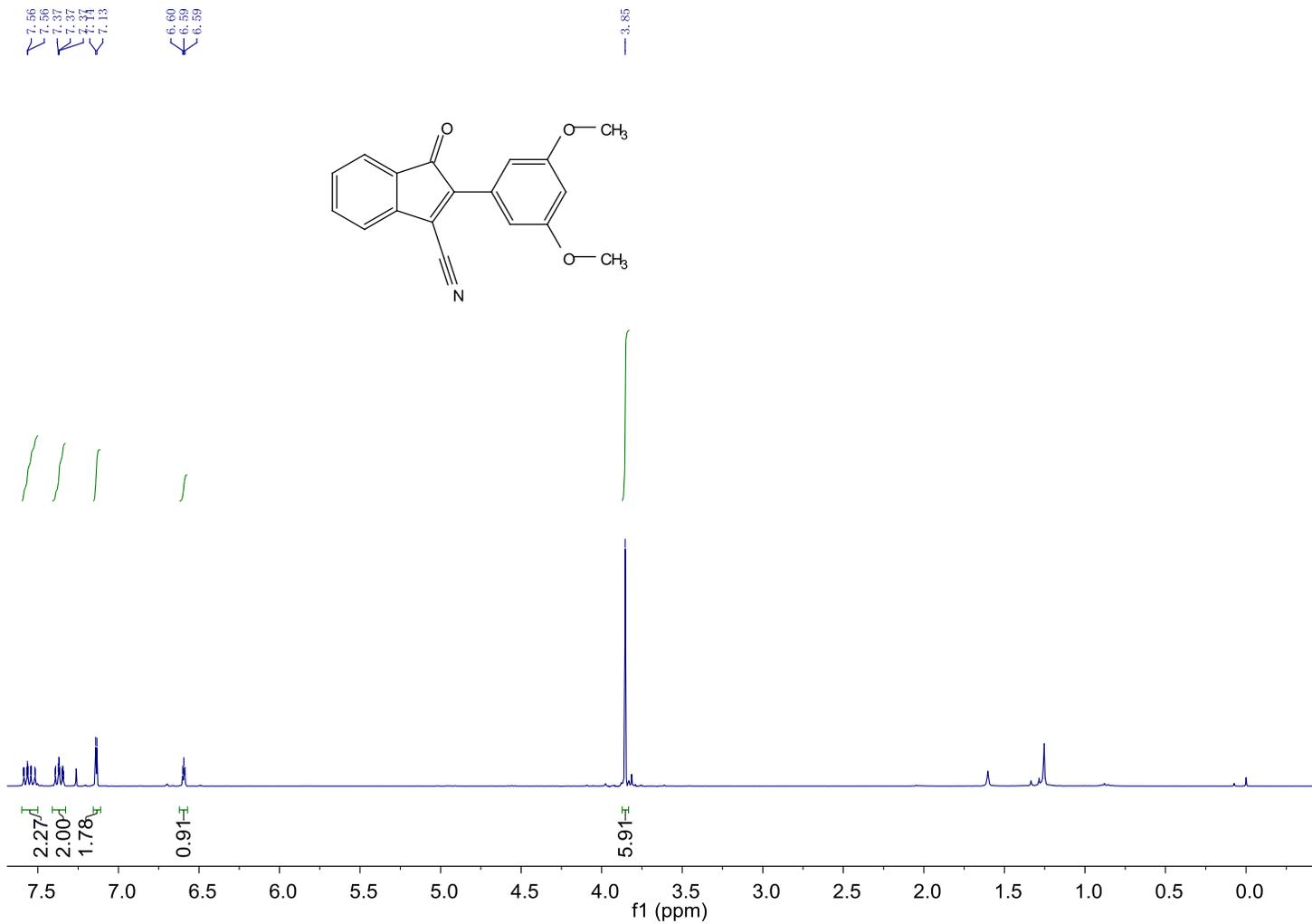


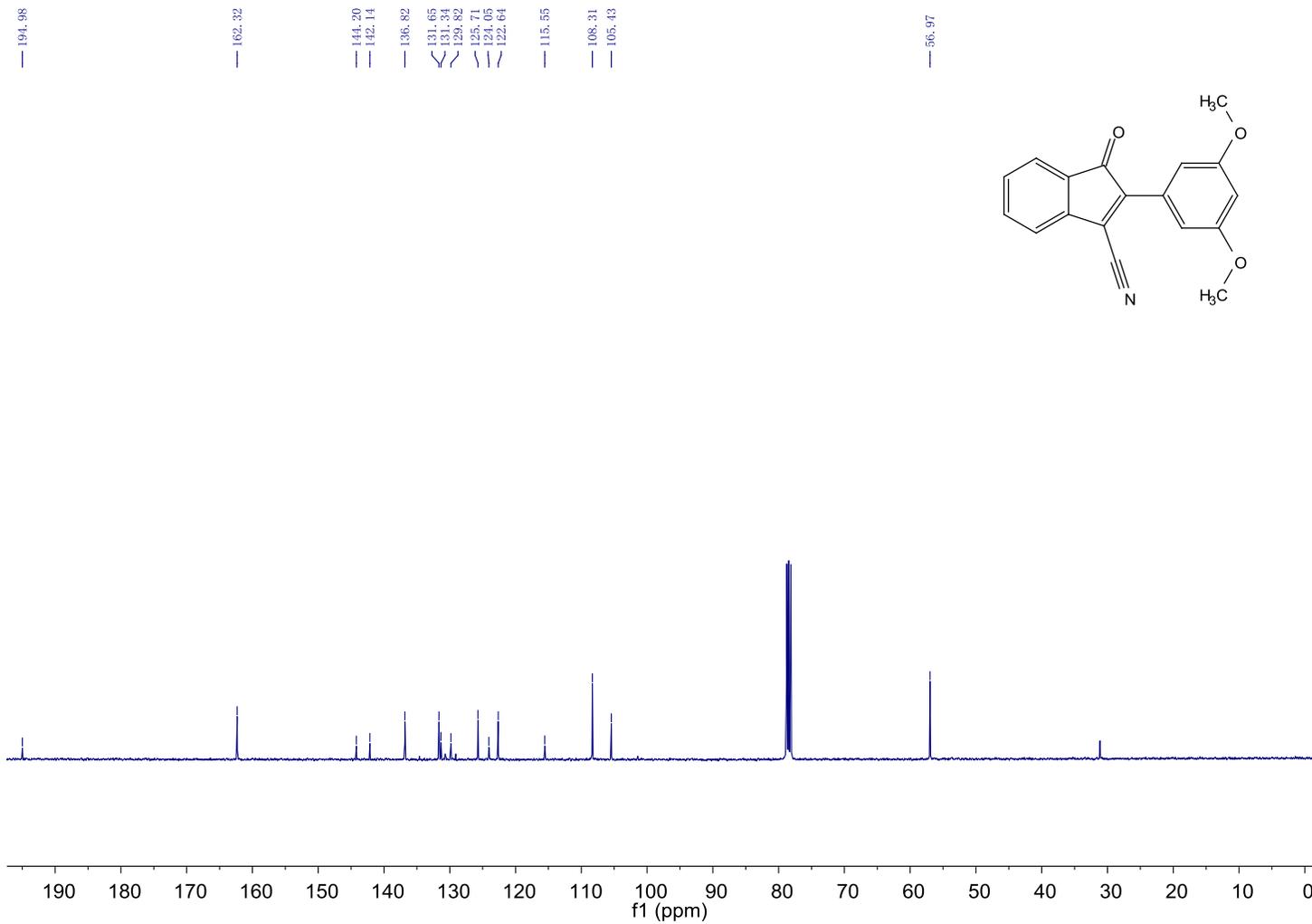
2o



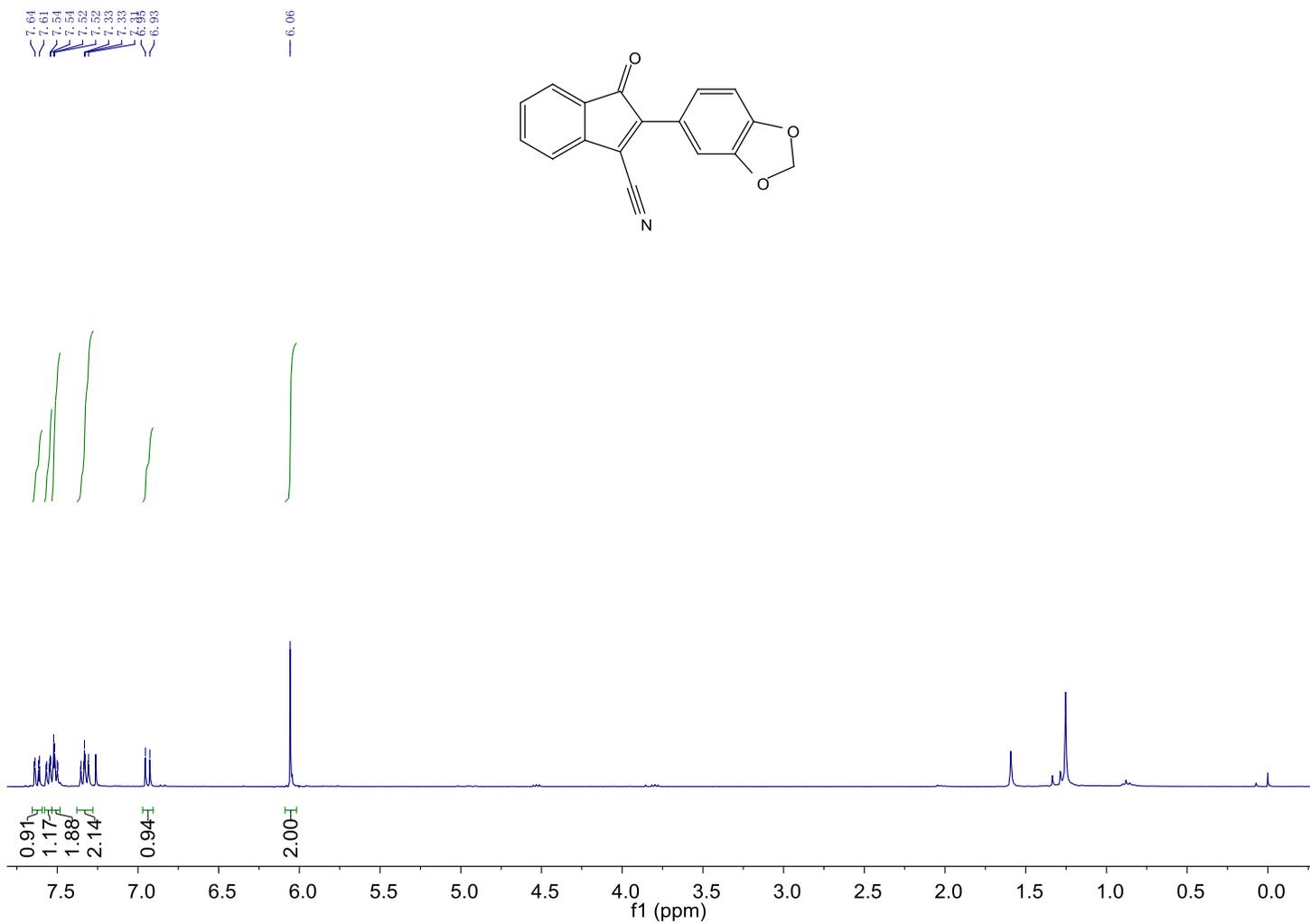


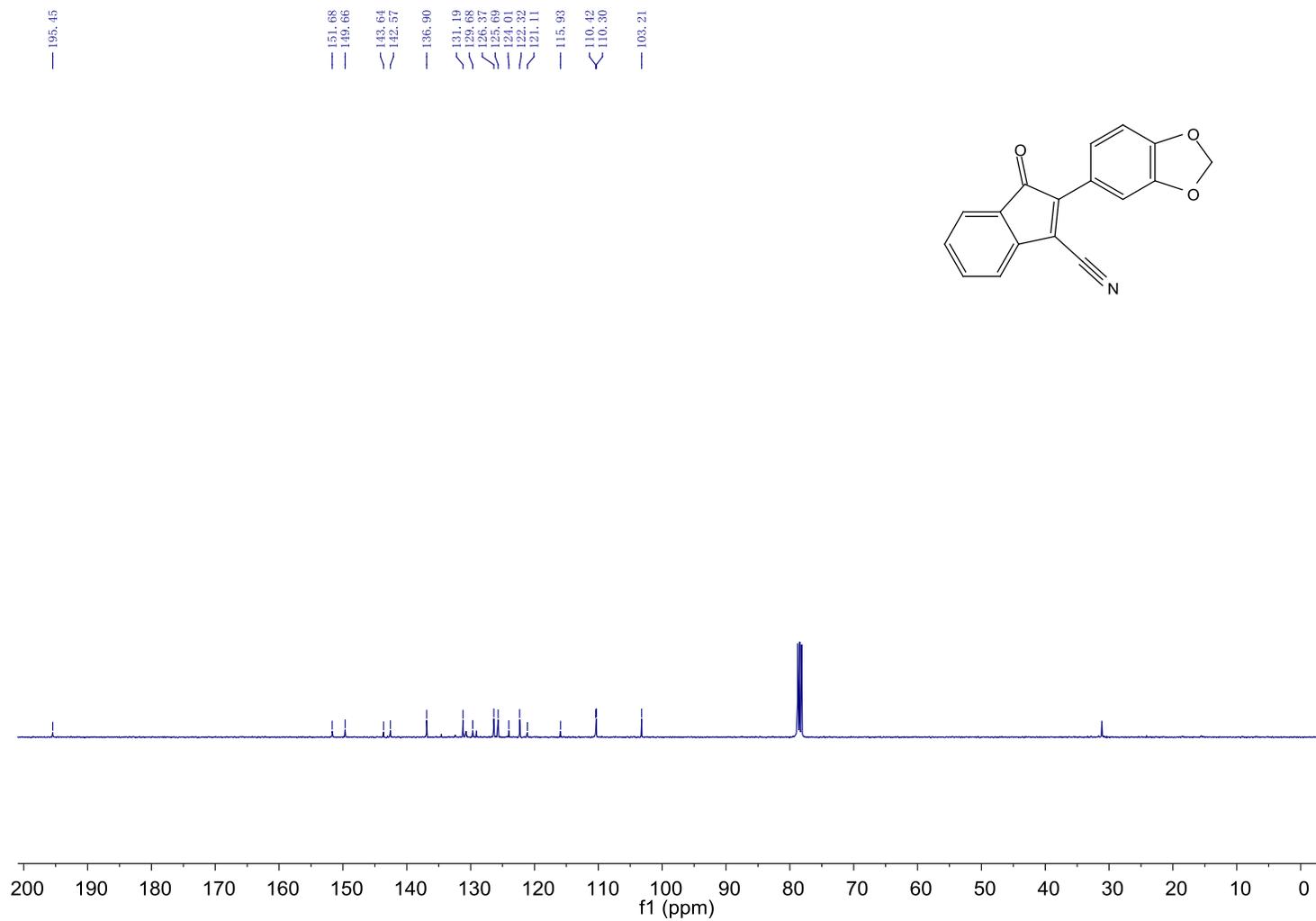
2p



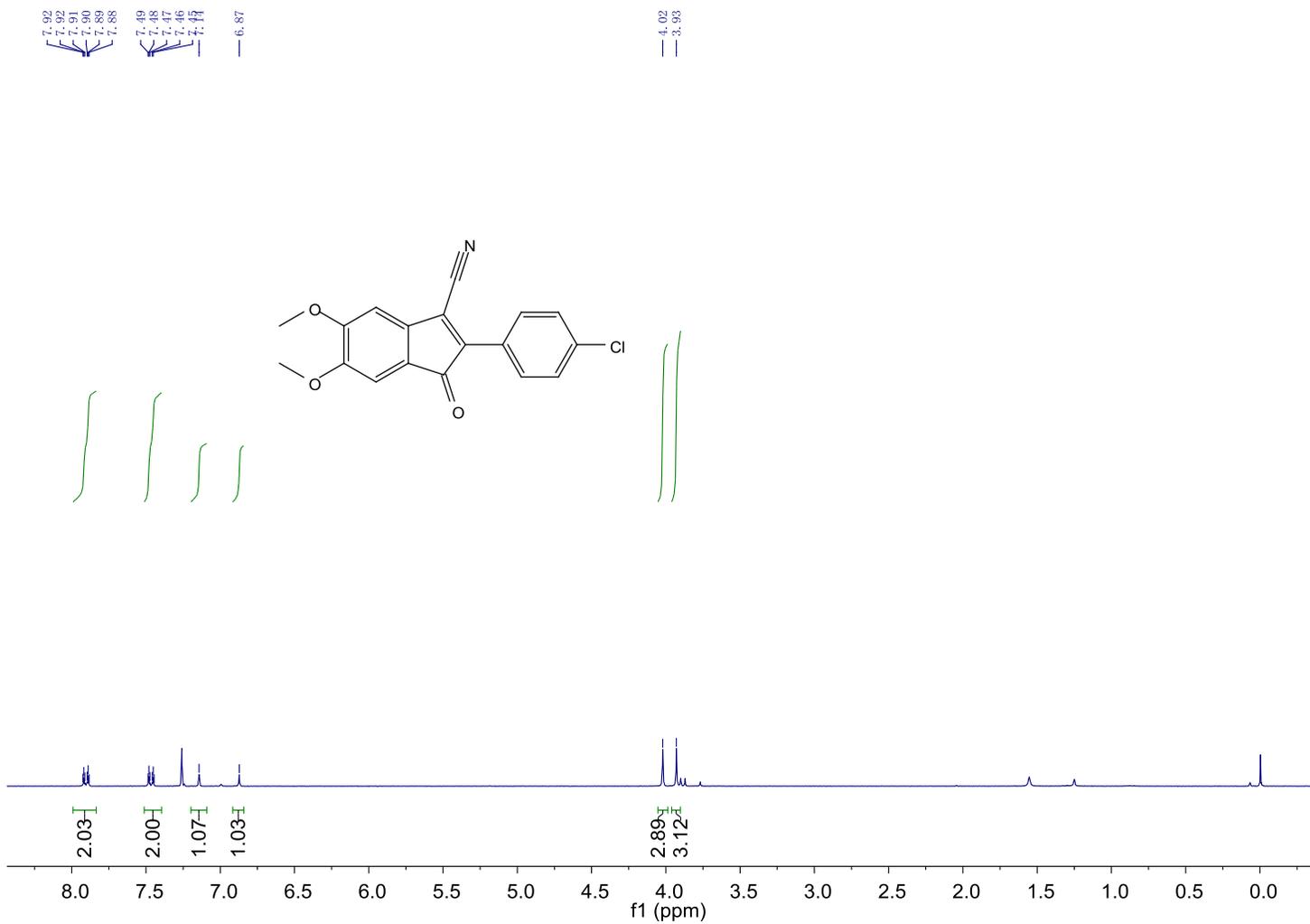


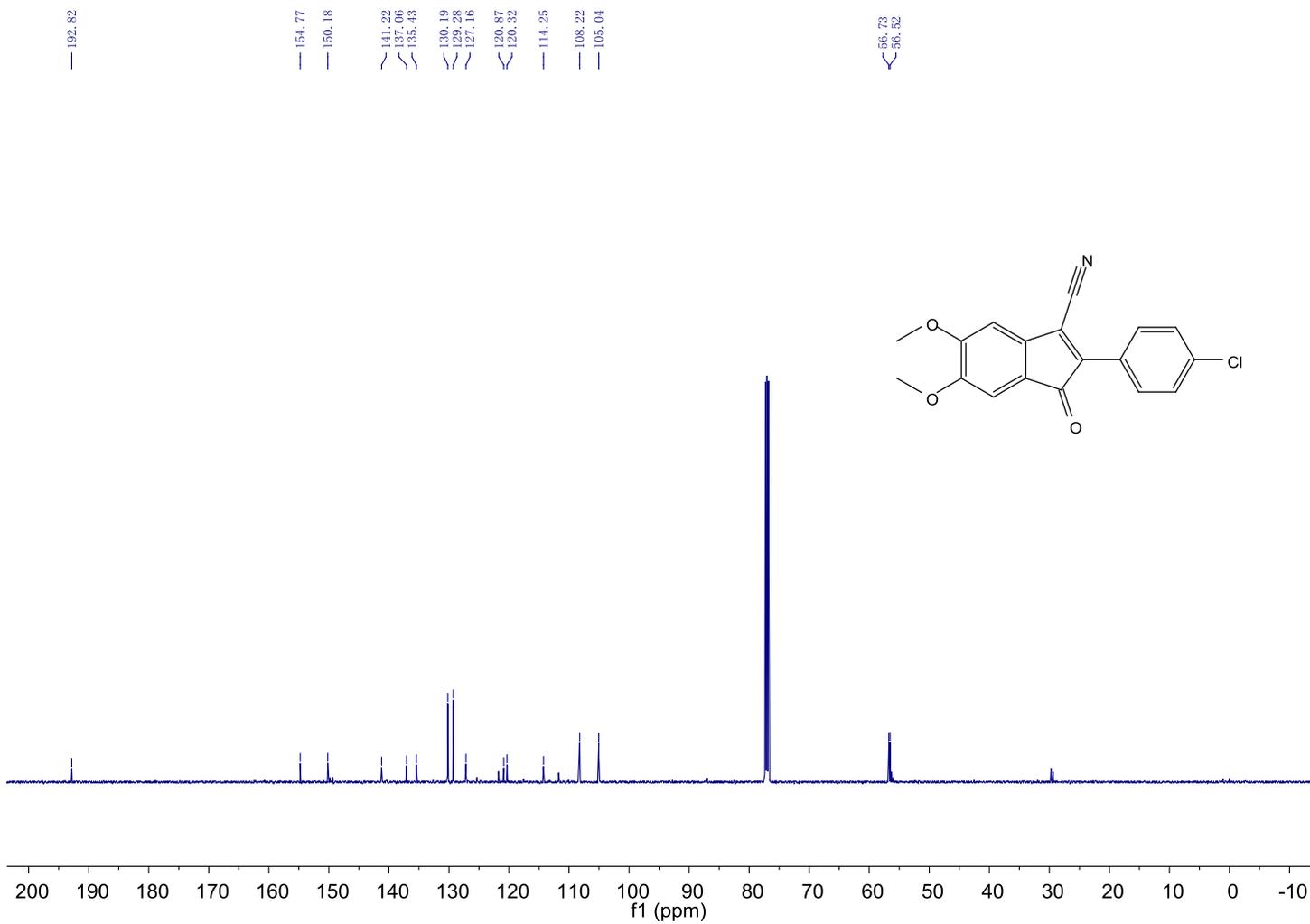
2q





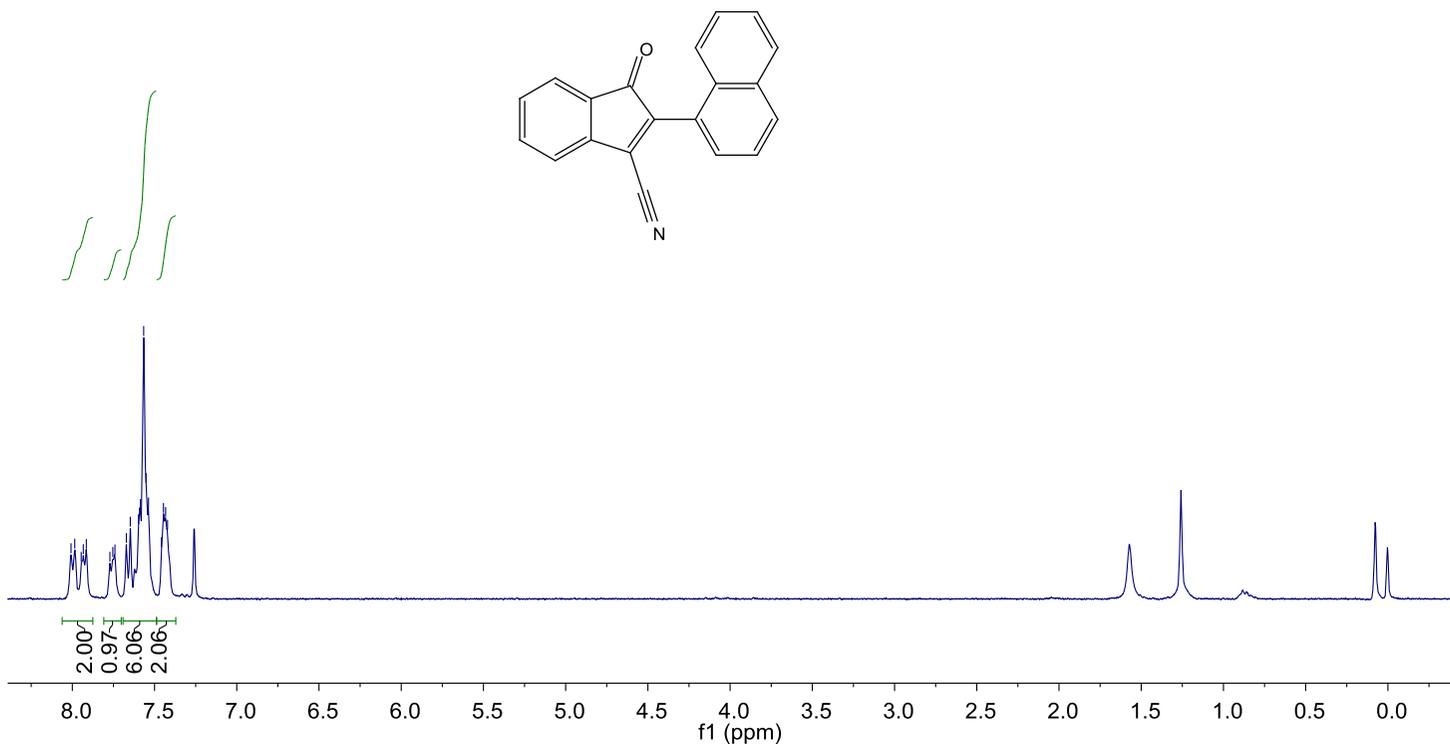
2r

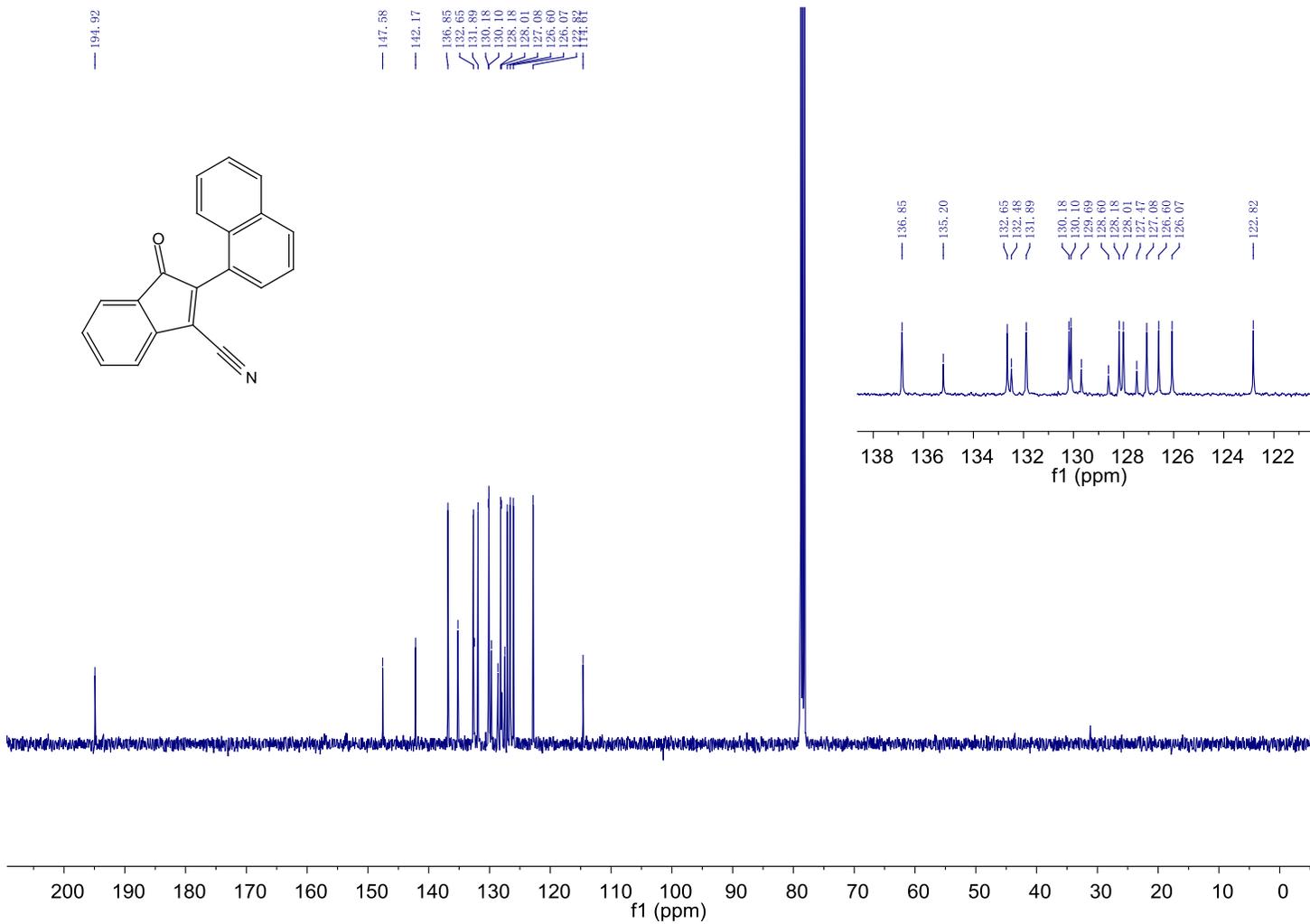




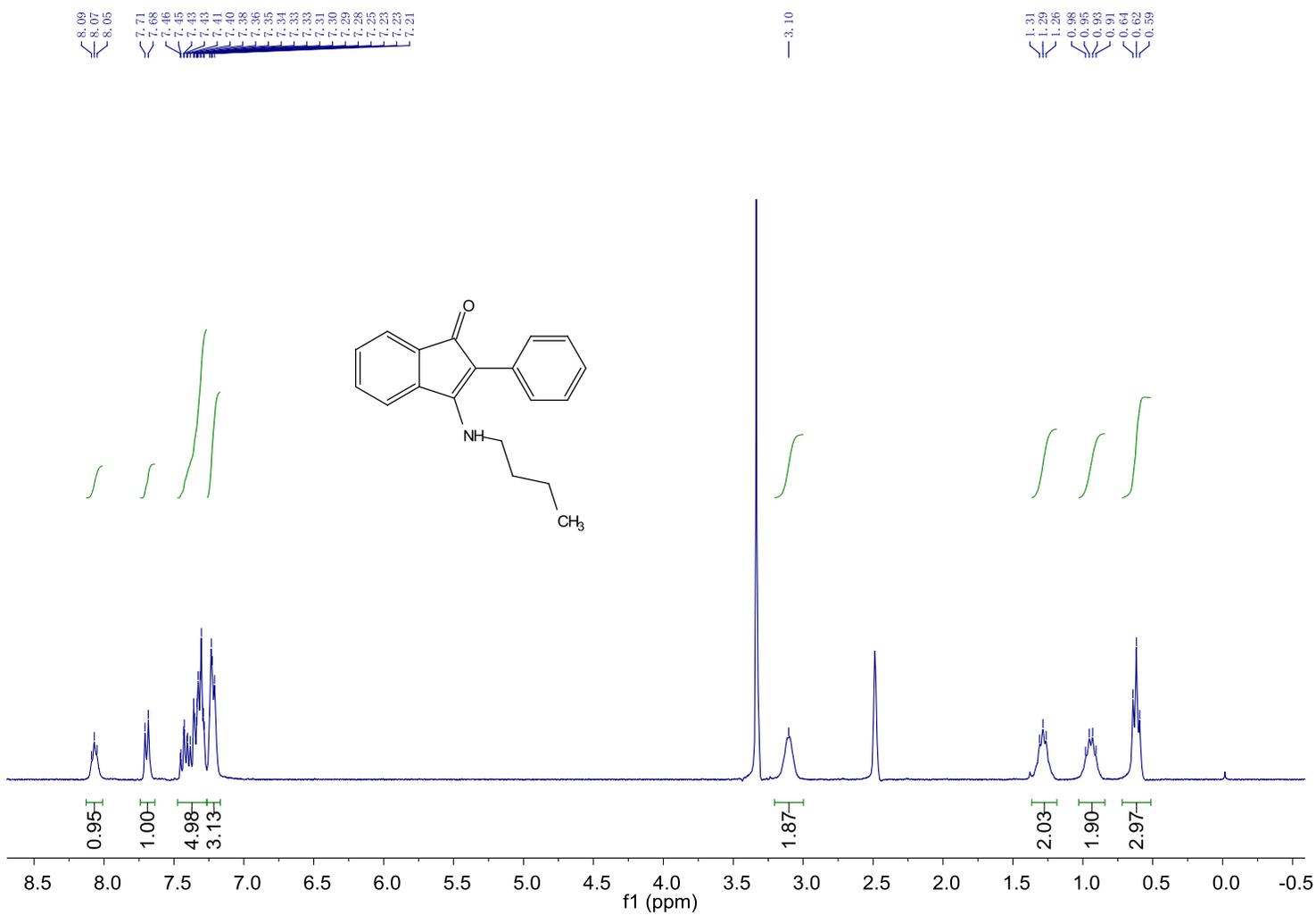
2s

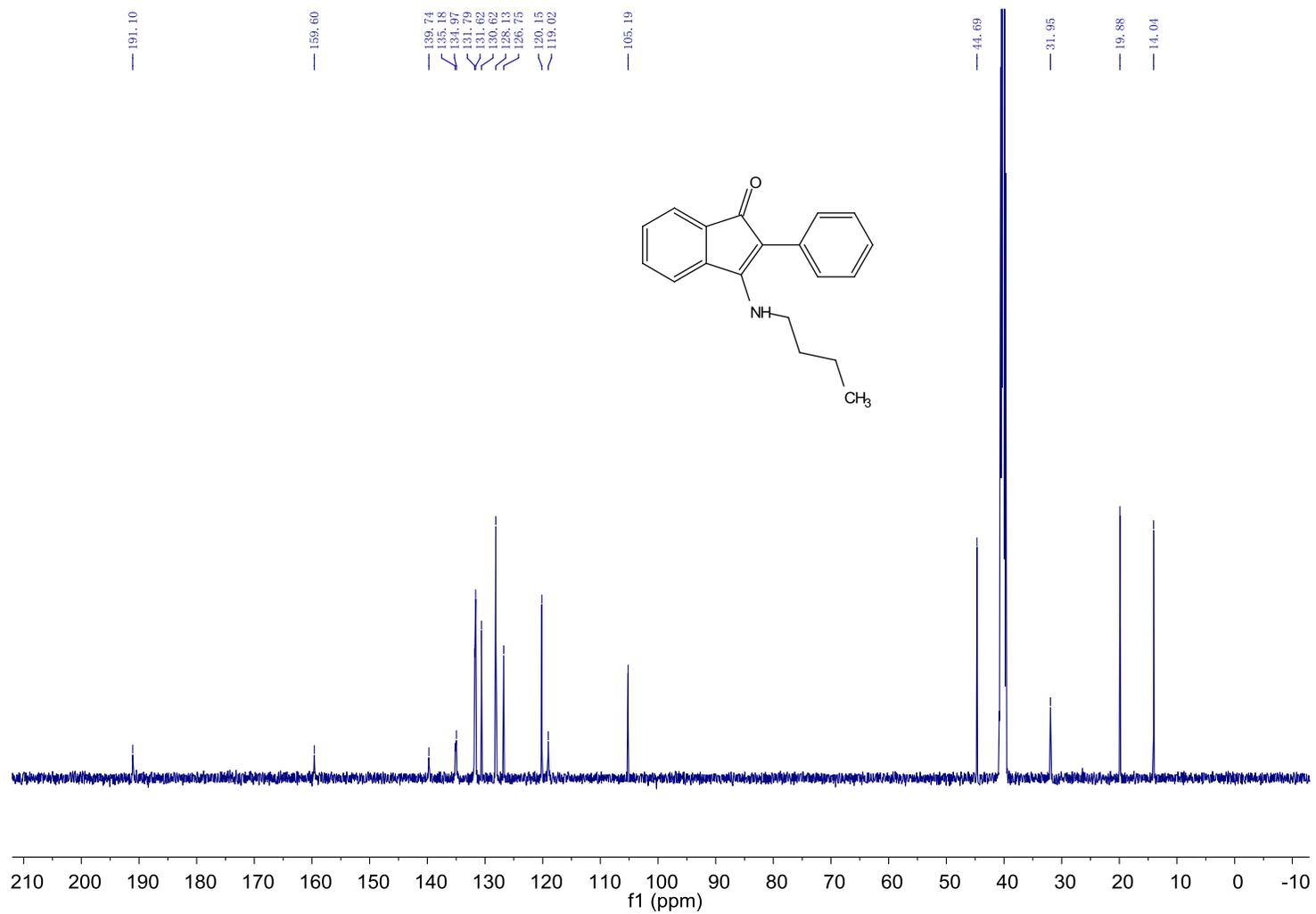
8.01  
7.95  
7.93  
7.91  
7.77  
7.75  
7.74  
7.67  
7.65  
7.60  
7.57  
7.55  
7.54  
7.46  
7.45  
7.43  
7.42





4

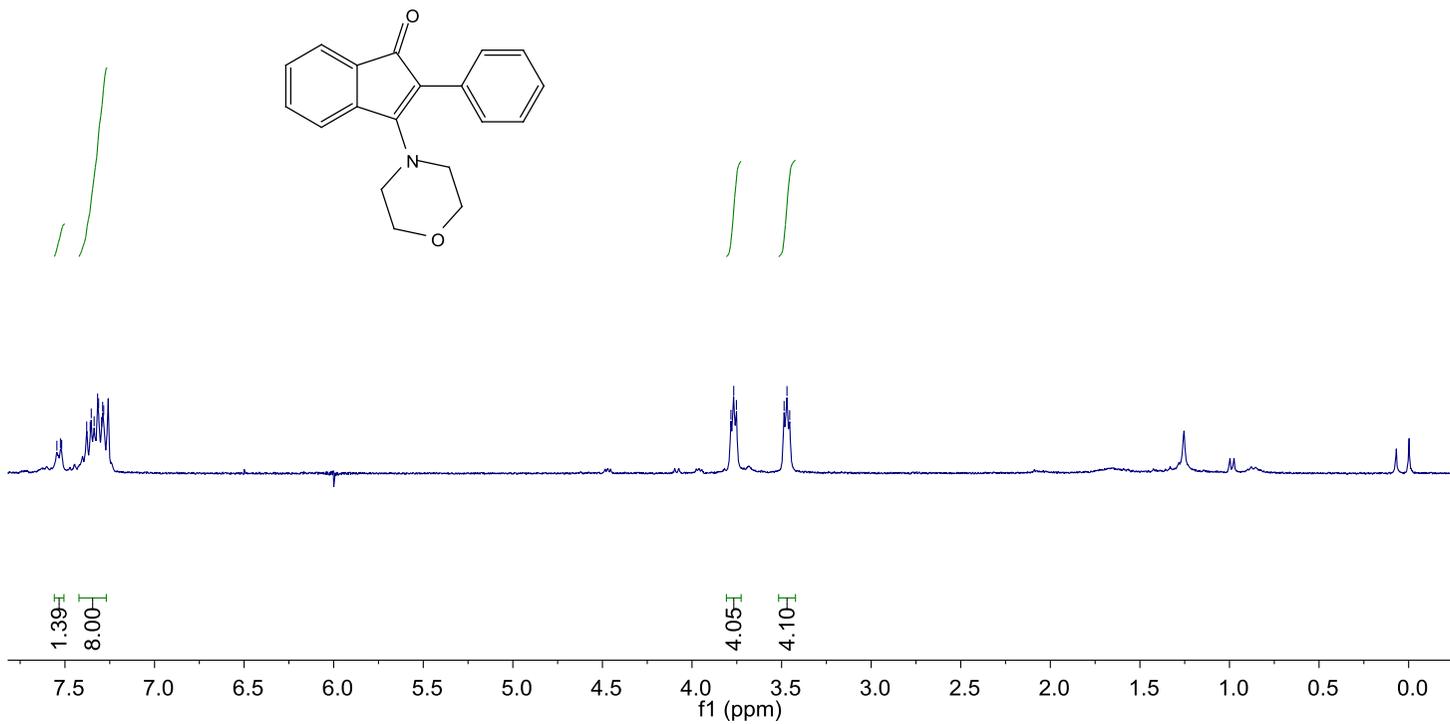


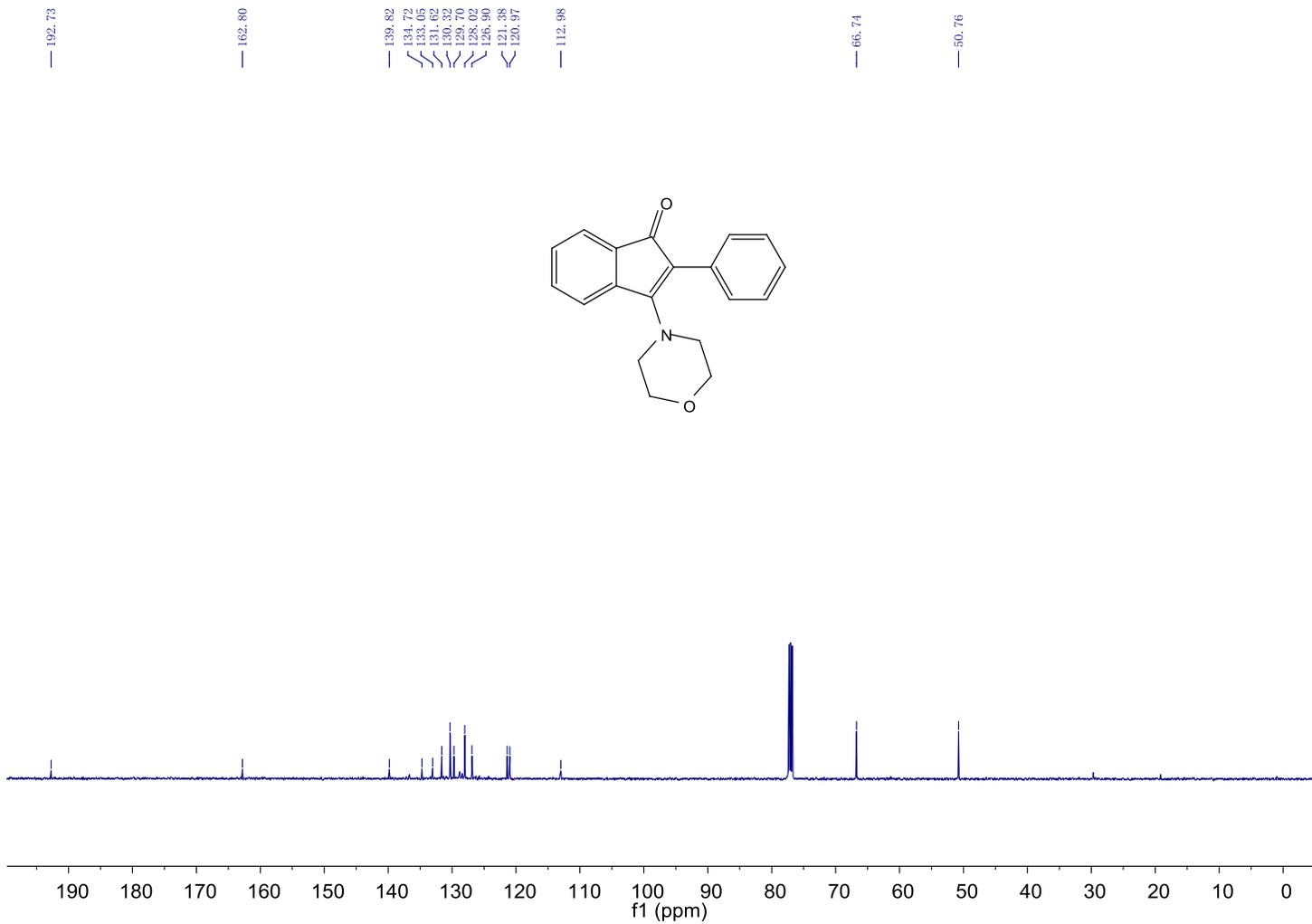


5

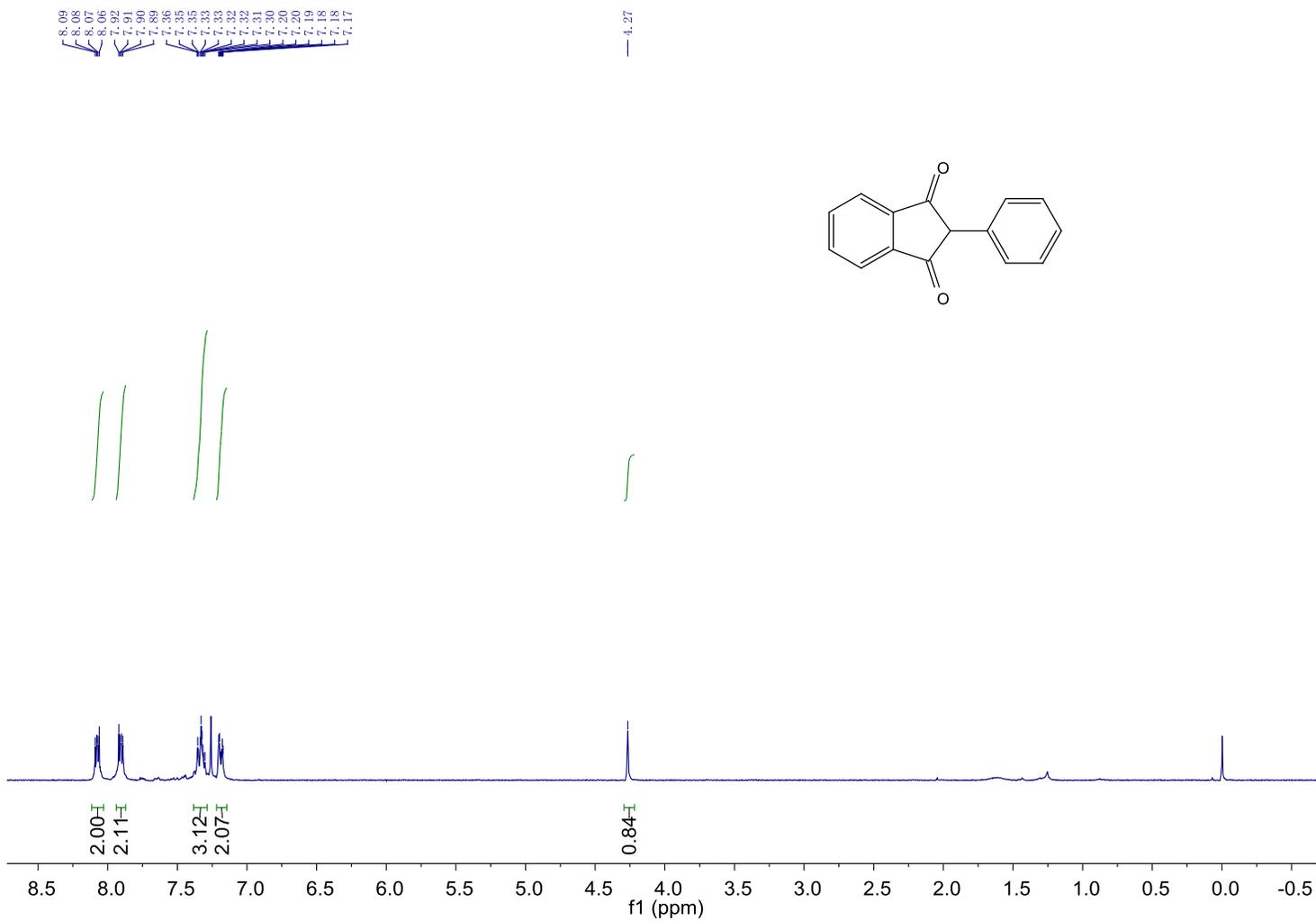
7.55  
7.52  
7.49  
7.48  
7.46  
7.45  
7.34  
7.32  
7.31  
7.30  
7.29  
7.28

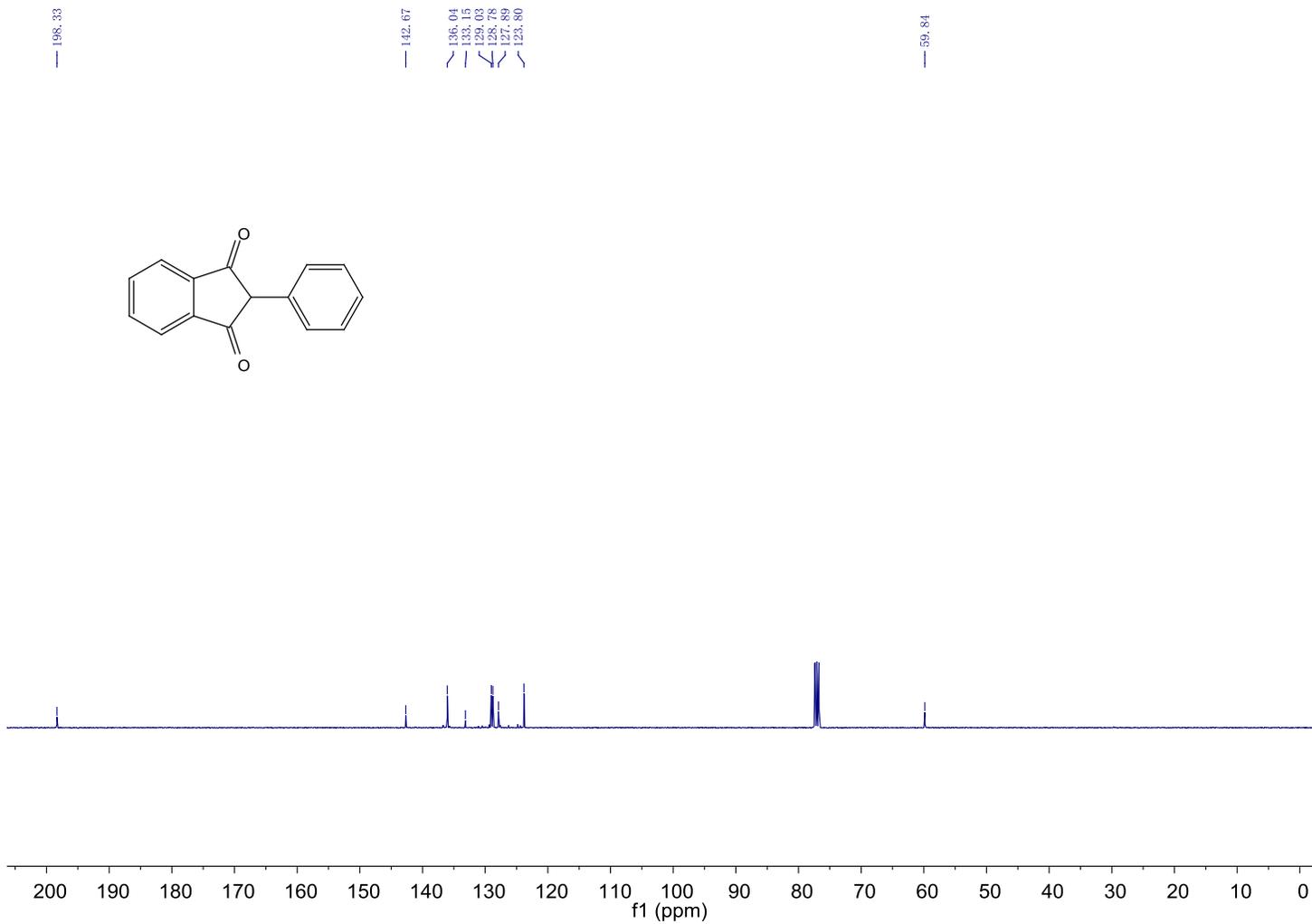
3.78  
3.77  
3.75  
3.49  
3.47  
3.45



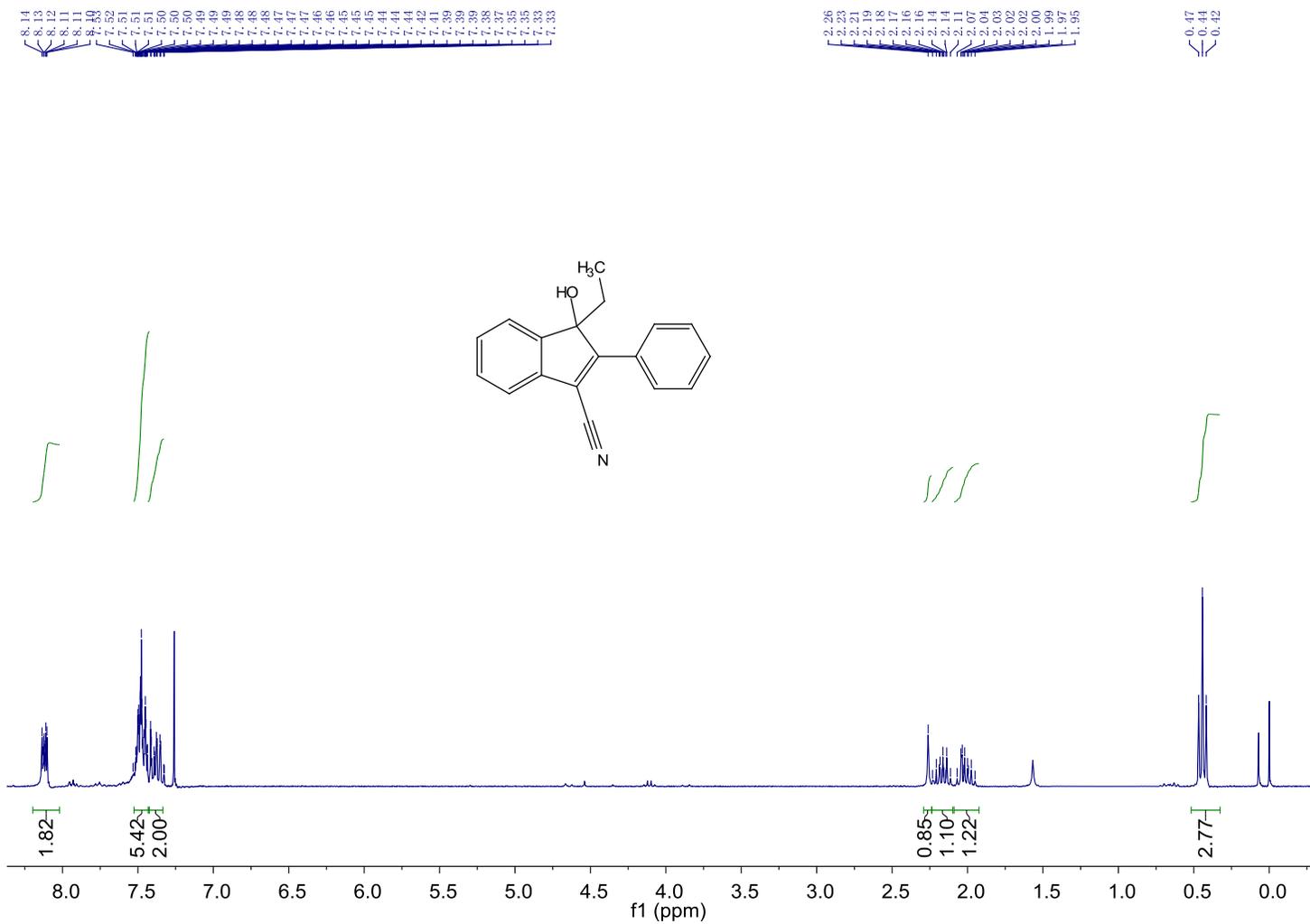


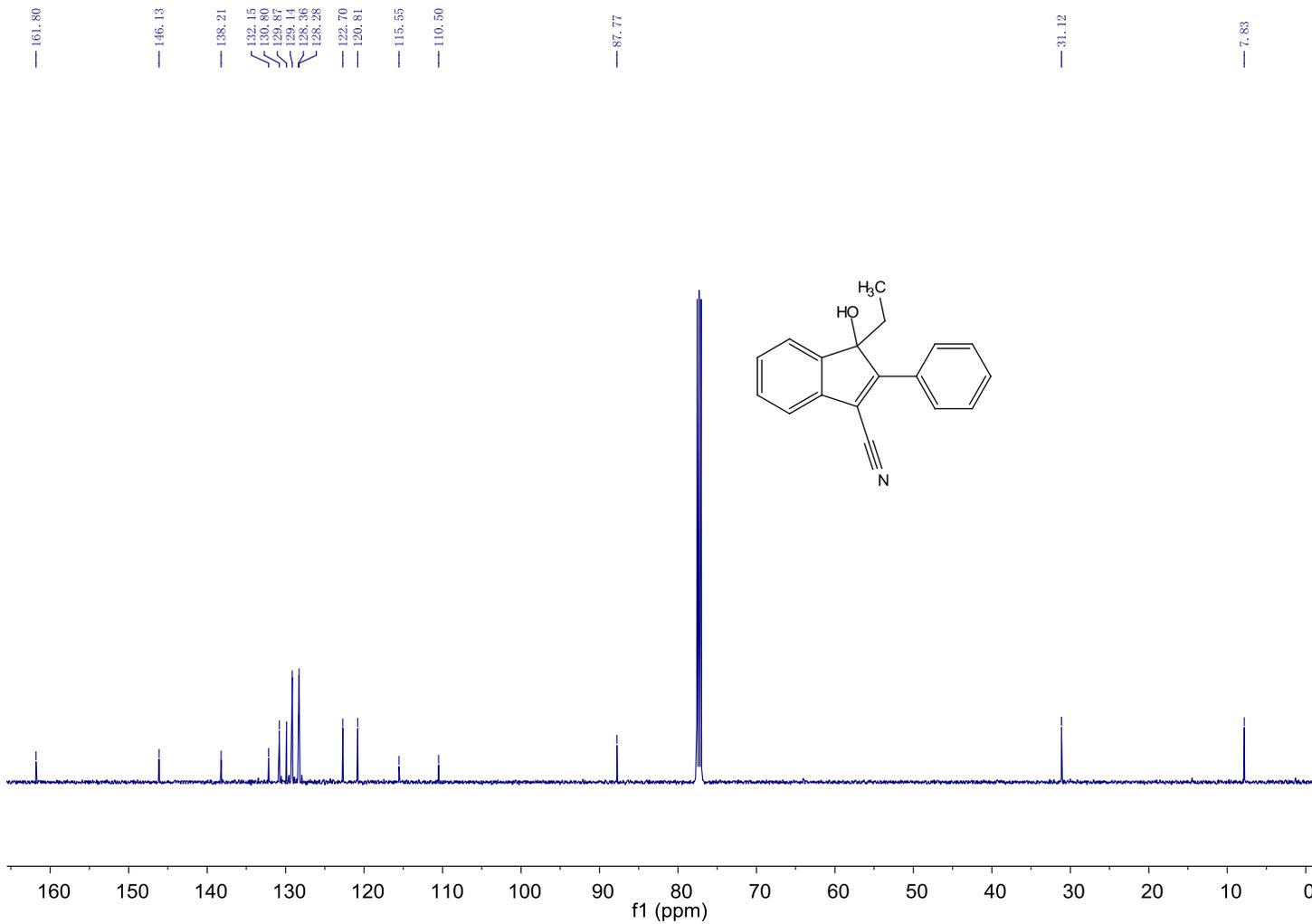
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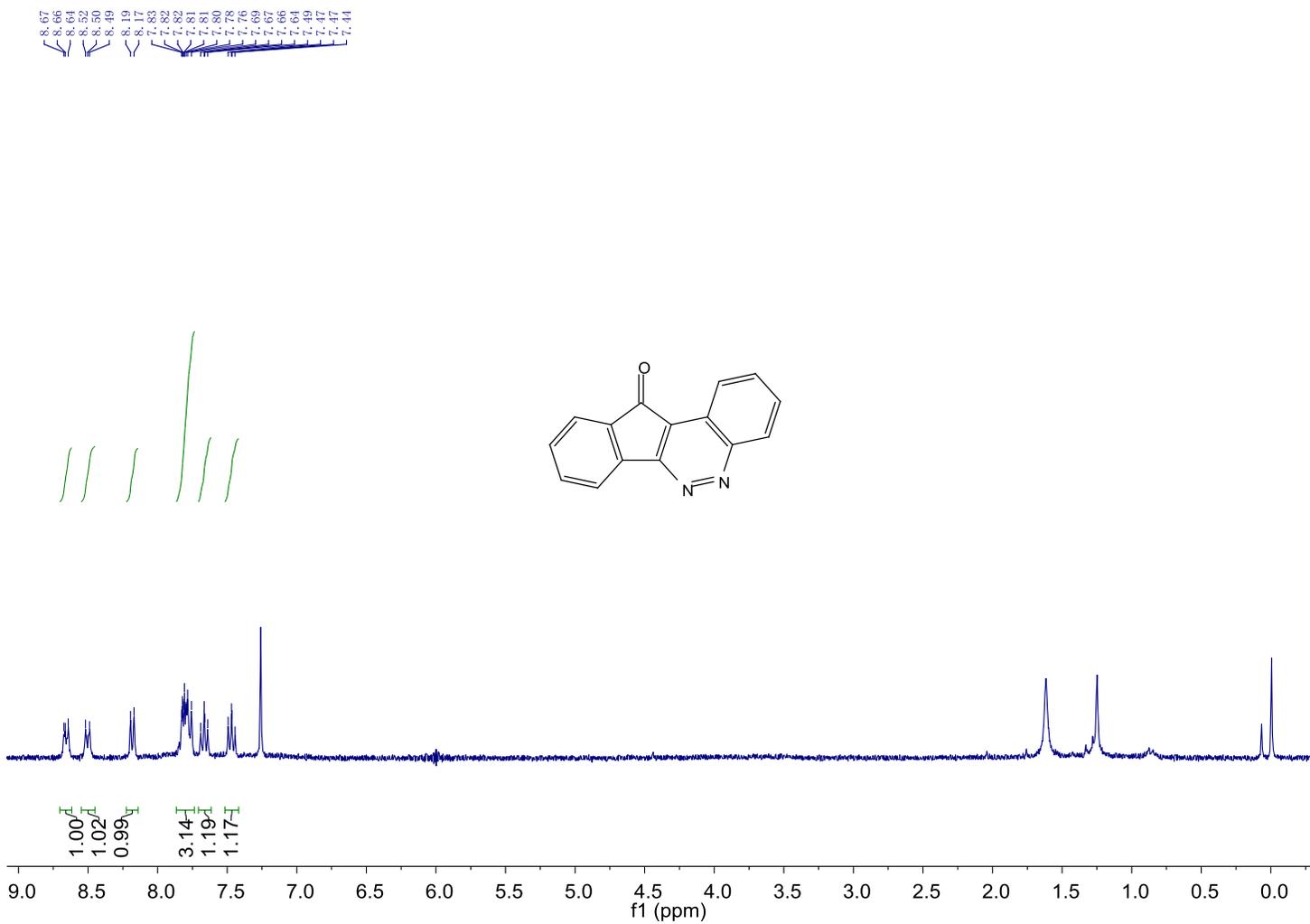


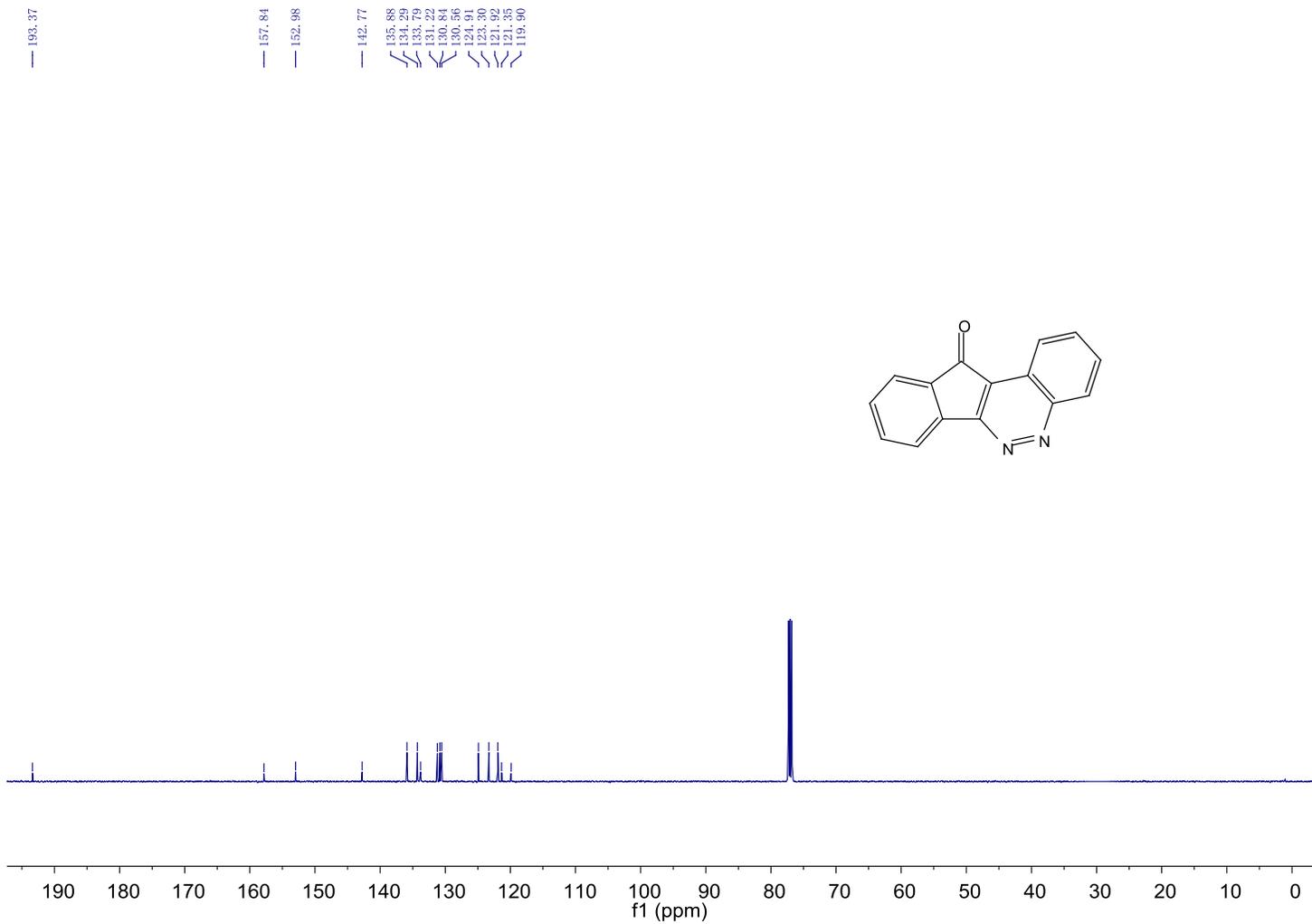
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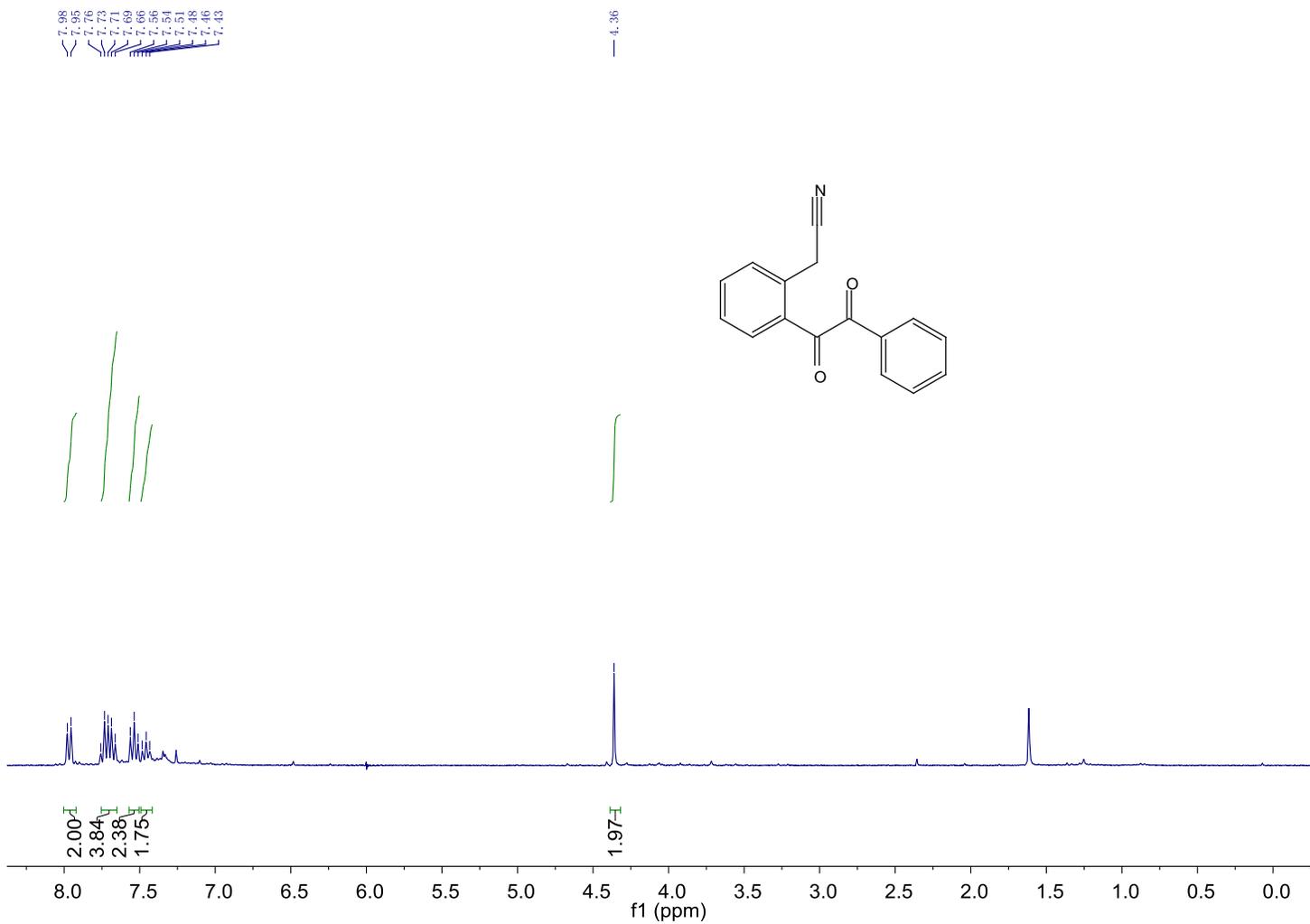


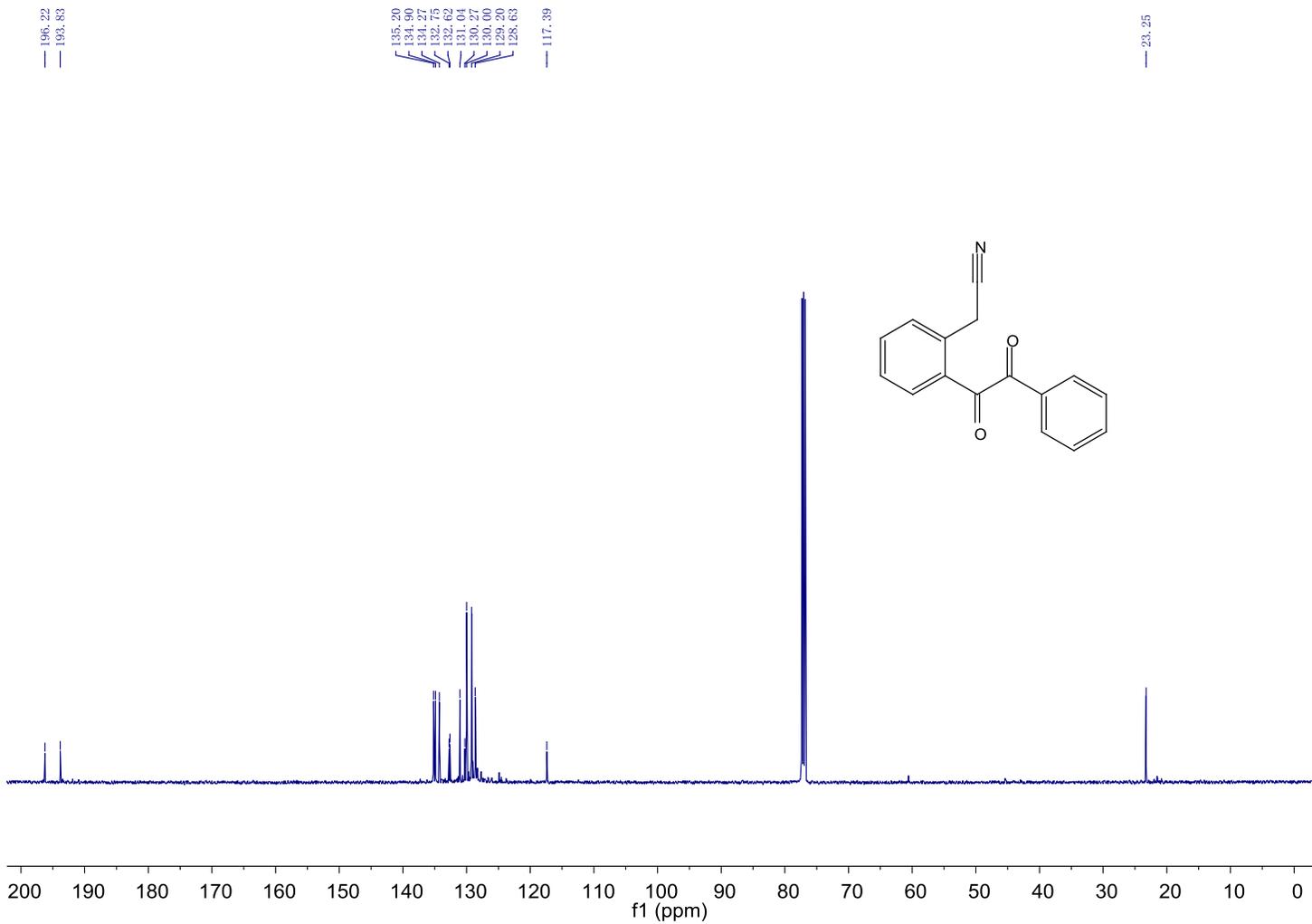
8





3a





**X-ray structure of 2d**

